Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-THREE • NUMBER TWO • FEBRUARY 1992

What Is Anti-Semitism?

An Open Letter to William F. Buckley, Jr.

Norman Podhoretz

The Miami Model

Mario Vargas Llosa

Clarence Thomas and the Blacks

Arch Puddington

How Important Are the Dead Sea Scrolls?

Robert Alter

A Story

Richard Stern

Harassment Blues

Naomi Munson

Nadine Gordimer's Politics

Jillian Becker

Books in Review: Hillel Halkin / Terry Teachout / Irving Louis Horowitz / David Brock / Charlotte Allen

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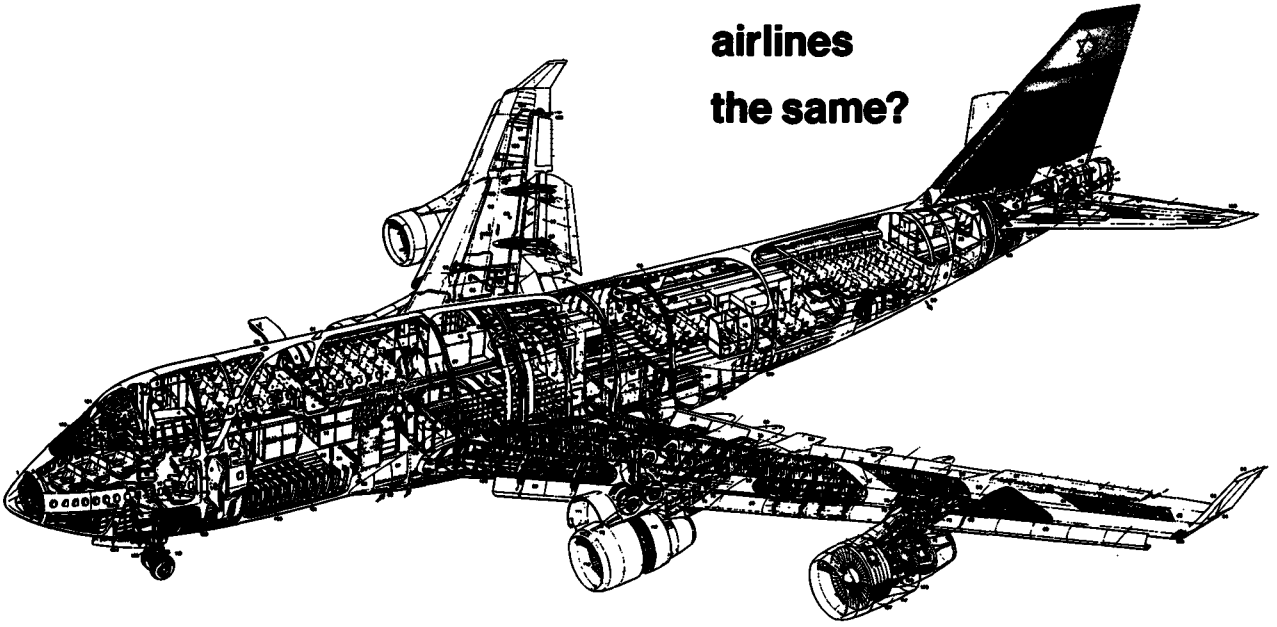
Are all airlines the same?



They all have
nuts and bolts.
And wings.
And seats.
But do they
all have pilots
trained by the
Israeli Air Force?
The best
Kosher cuisine?
The most
nonstops to Israel?
The best business
class to Israel?
37 destinations
from Israel?
A history of
bringing
immigrants from
all over the
world to Israel?
Next question.

EL AL

The Airline of Israel.

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

The End of the Cold War

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Until its unconvincing effort to give principal credit for the collapse of Communism to the Reagan administration, I thought "The Cold War & the Intellectuals" by Owen Harries [October 1991] was one of the finest articles COMMENTARY has ever published. I agree that Gorbachev, though an important contributor to this collapse (*nolens volens*), must nevertheless be regarded somewhat more as a product than as a producer. But I cannot agree that the "obvious new, vital factor" was the Reagan administration.

Stagnation and disaffection were far advanced in the Soviet Union before the mid-1980's. The true state of stagnation and unproductivity was well-known to the leadership and to the educated classes, but with increasing exposure to the West (a danger that Stalin had taken pains to avoid), disaffection grew and spread.

Reagan's contribution was to concur in Gorbachev's disarmament proposal at Reykjavik and to spend enormous sums that really did not threaten the Soviet Union, unless one assumes (1) that the Soviet leadership was concerned that America had aggressive designs and would counter or ignore the Soviet nuclear-deterrent capability; (2) that the Soviets were forced into bankruptcy by trying to equal the American arms build-up; and (3) that the Soviets grossly overestimated the potential effectiveness of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and were unaware of how cheaply it could be overwhelmed. There is no evidence of which I am aware that the Soviet arms budget increased in response to American spending during the mid-1980's to a level which the economy could not sustain. Absent such evidence and absent a genuine fear of aggression, this American spending did not contribute to the Soviet collapse.

I suggest that many causes of the collapse originated earlier and accumulated gradually until they reached a critical stage. The precipitating occasion was most likely the Afghanistan war, which triggered in the population, as word spread of the thousands of killed and wounded, a surge of dissatisfaction and a sense of defeat in an endeavor which seemed to have no useful purpose. Glasnost allowed the dissatisfaction to spread further, and no one could stop it. The defeat of Soviet arms and the loss of all those young men catalyzed a mixture of problems that had existed for many years.

ROBERT H. HAINES
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Cold War & the Intellectuals," Owen Harries continues COMMENTARY's glorification of Ronald Reagan, this time as the apostle of the victory over Communism. No evidence is offered, however, that Reagan's policies—the arms build-up, SDI, aid to Afghanistan, and denunciation of the Soviet system—were anything other than a continuation of similar or related anti-Communist policies of all previous administrations since World War II.

The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, the war against North Korea—all these took place under Truman; to this list may be added Kennedy's defiance of Khrushchev in the Cuban missile crisis; Johnson's relentless waging of the war in Vietnam (sacrificing a second full term for it); Carter's Camp David, which effectively diminished Soviet power in the Middle East, as well as his promotion of a human-rights program. All of the foregoing were as bold, creative, and effective (even the standoff in Vietnam) in opposing the threat of Communism as anything done by Reagan.

I have cited only what was done by the liberal Presidents because Mr. Harries makes his case one of conservative success as against liberal failure. There are liberals and there are liberals. Some have been realistic about the dangers and evil of Communism, some less so. To lump them all together for the sake of making a debating point is hardly worthy of intelligent discourse. The AFL-CIO, for instance, has been both militantly anti-Communist and sharply critical of Henry Wallace-type liberalism. Sidney Hook, a social democrat, did as much to stanch the lunatic tide of pro-Communism in the intellectual world as did all the conservatives, including the neos.

Furthermore, the idea that the

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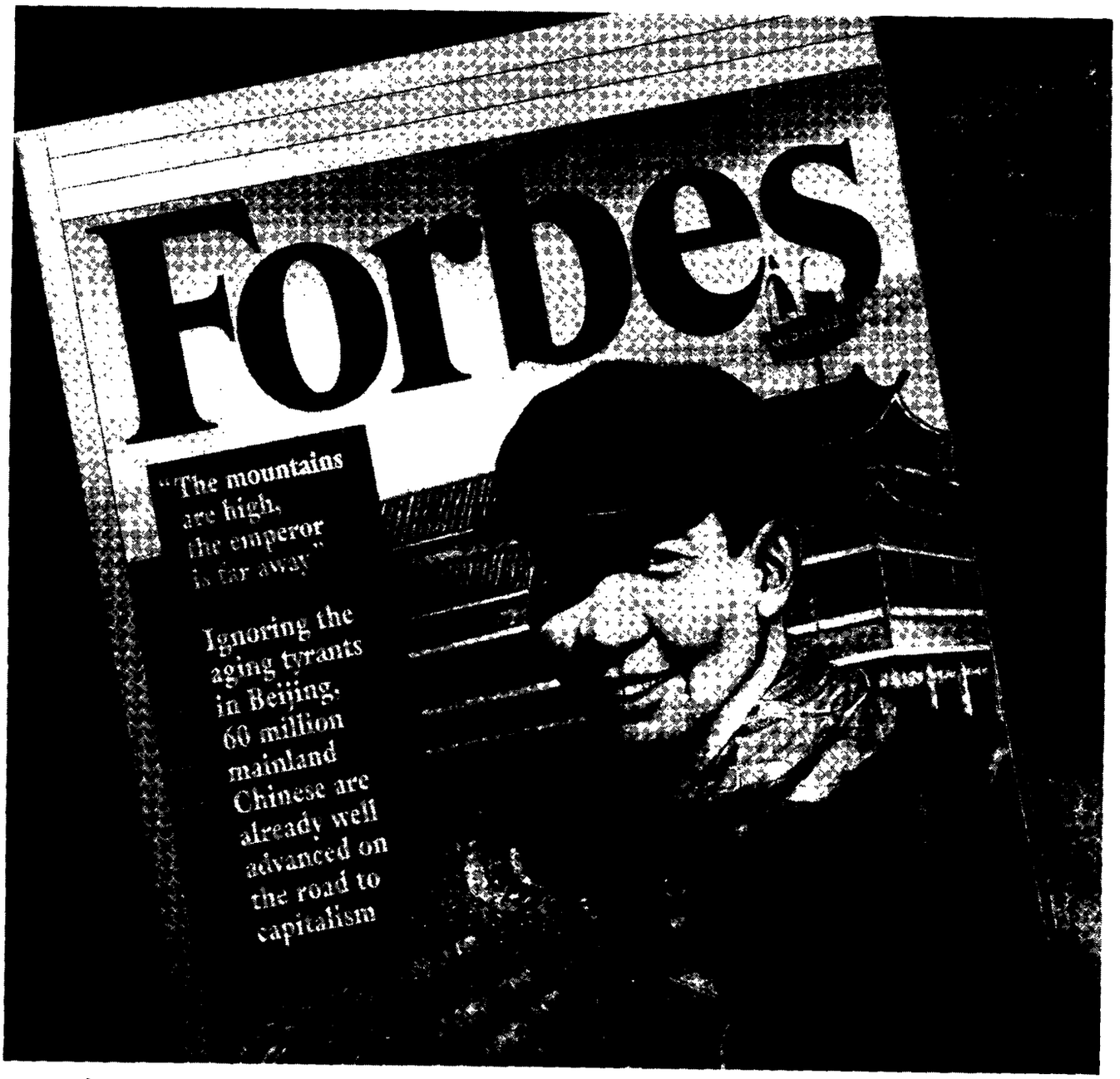
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"The mountains are high, the emperor is far away."
Ignoring the aging tyrants in Beijing, 60 million mainland Chinese are already well advanced on the road to capitalism

American management should know that capitalism is winning in China too.

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The autocrats are terrified. They can't stop the shift in power from the northern bureaucrats to the businessmen in the South. Ultimately, Hong Kong is more likely to control Beijing rather than vice versa.

What can the U.S. do for the cause? Congress should stop trying to end China's most-favored-nation status. Which would only discourage capitalism and bolster the communists.

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Soviets began to cringe at the growing military might of the U.S. in the 80's is also not very persuasive. With all the knowledge of U.S. policies and inclinations available to the USSR, and with an embassy in Washington which dealt daily and directly with its U.S. counterparts, read our press, and studied our national mentality, it is childish to think that the Soviets had any reason to regard us as a threat to their existence. . . .

In light of this, the turnabout in the USSR could not have resulted merely from giving up the notion of outgunning us in any form. The Soviet military structure was for keeping the satellites in place, for intimidating its own people, for excursions into Afghanistan, for building up alliances in the Middle East, for shoring up Communist power in Angola, Ethiopia, Cuba, Central America, and wherever else Communist clients emerged, and, in general, for being reckoned with as an awesome superpower and as a bully presence on the global scene. The idea that the U.S. had more military power under Reagan could hardly have been a decisive factor in recent Soviet policy.

The reason for the fall of Communism is as simple as it appears. It was held together by a totalitarian dictatorship. When that dictatorship decided not to use its totalitarian power, and to open up the liberating force of glasnost, the pent-up urge for freedom which had been forcibly suppressed for so many decades burst out—in some instances guardedly, and in others with a vengeance.

The decision was made by none other than Gorbachev. That decision did it, nothing else. Of course, it was based on the futility of matching the U.S. military build-up, on diminishing Soviet economic productivity, on awareness of the burgeoning productivity of the Western democracies, on the surly mood of the Soviet masses, on the lack of incentive of the Soviet worker, and on the growing disparity between Soviet and Western technology.

It was not the liberals among us who brought it about, or the conservatives, or Ronald Reagan. It was all of us, the total thrust of ideological contention and of social and economic development in the Western world, *plus* the insight and courage of the Soviet leader who was the only one in a position to make the change.

There was nothing imaginative, resourceful, or courageous that Reagan did that can possibly be compared with what Gorbachev did, and to interpret this most edifying historical happening of our century as an achievement of Ronald Reagan is a distortion which no amount of fancy rhetoric . . . can disguise.

WILLIAM STERN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although it is implicit in Owen Harries's excellent article, I think it is worth making it explicit that some of the credit for winning the cold war should go to the electorates of the NATO countries who for over 40 years steadfastly backed those parties that were strong NATO supporters and shunned the waverers. This was true even when the less resolute party claimed to be pro-NATO but advocated policies which, in effect, would have weakened the alliance. A case in point is the British Labor party with its pseudo-reasonable policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament. Despite a widespread inclination of the intellectuals, and especially the media intellectuals, to be anti-NATO, and in Europe venomously anti-American, the people consistently favored what were derisively termed the "cold warriors."

In fact, this electoral history constitutes a striking triumph for the basic axiom of democracy, that the voters will over the long haul choose what is in their own best interests.

JOSHUA JACOBSON
Herzlia, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found myself applauding silently while reading Owen Harries's article, but I think he misses one point, and in missing it, gives the "progressives" too much credit. He accepts the Left's mocking charge that we conservatives were unduly pessimistic in the fight against Communism and the USSR, without noting that our pessimism was largely caused by the very leftists who now rebuke us for it.

It was nothing said by Hannah Arendt or Jean-François Revel that caused my occasional depression during the cold war—a period coextensive with my adult life; I am sure I was not alone among conservatives in feeling quite confident that the free world could meet and overcome the challenge from Moscow on the economic or military front. What I and many like me weren't sure we could overcome, however, was the chic defeatism of the Galbraiths, Hoffmanns, Samuelsons, and their kin.

Mr. Harries quotes Michael Kinsley's statement that "Conservatives, having said the collapse of Communism would not happen, now claim credit for it." The reply to Kinsley is: "Liberals, having done all they could to prevent the collapse of Communism, now mock conservatives for failing to see that it was imminent."

MARK HALPERN
Oakland, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Owen Harries's article is undeniably brilliant and very perceptive, but I have two objections. The first concerns his remarks about Western intellectuals and the Great Depression. I was at that time a boy in Rockford, Illinois, a machine-tool town that was particularly hard hit by the depression, and I can testify that it was indeed a period of great suffering. Yet this does not justify the intellectuals who felt, in Mr. Harries's words, that "capitalism had substantially lost its legitimacy." In Russia, after all, there had been a severe famine with over a million deaths, followed by the great purge, during which many more millions of Soviet citizens were killed.

These things were not really secret, although Western intellectuals apparently did not know them. A principal character in one of C. P. Snow's novels speaks with condescension of the "little dentists who really know nothing about the Soviet Union," yet those little dentists probably knew more about the Soviet Union than intellectuals like Snow. In the Rockford Public Library there was a shelf about five feet high devoted entirely to the "I-escaped-from-a-Soviet-prison-camp" type of literature. Some of these accounts were presumably imaginative fiction, but surely the bulk of them were quite true. The intellectuals did not read this kind of literature, preferring instead the articles that got Walter Duranty of the New York *Times* a Pulitzer Prize, articles denying that there was any starvation in Russia. The "loss of legitimacy," in other words, was not that of capitalism, but of the intellectuals.

I have another problem with the

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article which has to do with the view of at least some of the "conservatives" mentioned by Mr. Harries. Speaking for myself, I spent nine years in the Department of State studying Asian Communism and I never thought that there was a new Soviet, new Cuban, or new Chinese man. . . . What I did think, however, was that a well-functioning secret police, together with control of the channels of information, could keep the people calm, if not wildly happy under a totalitarian regime. . . . They would make the best adjustment they could to the situation. . . . Of course, any hint that they had some other option would change their attitude very rapidly.

As far as I can see, this still holds true. What happened was that a man became dictator of the Soviet Union—with all the vast powers of that office—who did not like the system. There was no way available in that power structure to resist him, and so the power structure disintegrated.

My evidence for this is that there are five Communist countries where the government retained full secret-police control together with strong censorship—China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and Romania. Four of these countries are still operating as before, but Romania, which suffered stupid management for years, finally benefited from the stupidity of its dictator who had failed to make sure that the army was under his control. . . .

Despotism . . . has very strong instruments to maintain its control. It tends to fail only if for one reason or another the top branches of the system lose their faith, as the French nobles around Louis XVI did, and as the Russians around the last czar did. We owe an immense debt of gratitude to Gorbachev, but not as great a debt as the Russians do.

Gordon Tullock
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

To the Editor of Commentary:

Owen Harries's article is brilliantly conceived and a tonic for the mind. However, his attempt to discover "irony" in the outcome of the cold war leads him to err in accusing the conservatives of having overestimated the "extent and durability of Soviet power and the threat it represented, and [being] only late in realizing that the Soviet Union was in a state of serious crisis." His own arguments about the fate of the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires and of Nazi Germany would seem to argue otherwise. The future was not foreordained, and the Soviet crisis was substantially exacerbated by late Western resistance, as evidenced by the importance he properly allots to Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

Let us recall the systemic weakness and crisis from which we have returned so dramatically in recent years. The American defeat in Southeast Asia was greater, more unambiguous, and even more humiliating than the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the social divisions in American society in the aftermath of the war were just as paralyzing. There was no real reason to expect that the United States would not continue on its downward spiral of social, economic, and political failure feeding upon itself. I am still convinced that if Carter had been reelected in 1980, we might not have lasted long enough for a Mondale administration to have a share in delivering the *coup de grâce*.

This string of domestic fiascos and international defeats at the hands of the Soviets helped to legitimize their system even as it delegitimized ours, a process greatly expedited by the massive repudiation of our system by those very liberals now running to reembrace it, like migrating birds seeking the most comfortable clime.

Even as late as 1980, few would have presumed that the aging ex-movie actor would even win the Republican nomination, let alone be elected twice, and manage one of history's great strategic triumphs. Likewise, it is disputable that the conservatives overestimated the military aspects of the threat. Bear in mind that the weapons which won the Gulf War and terrorized the Soviet general staff were new technologies which came into service only because of the Reagan administration. . . .

Critics of the conservatives are much like the cured cancer patient who assails his doctor for all that unpleasant and expensive surgery and chemotherapy which have been proven unnecessary by the fact that the cancer went away.

There is an irony in "convergence theory," however. During the 1960's and 1970's, there was indeed a certain amount of convergence between Soviet and American society, though in ways that the the-

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ory's champions would not care to emphasize. These two decades witnessed the massive growth of a central government increasingly inclined to manage the economy and to intrude ever more blatantly into previously private matters, a government which continually engaged in radical social-engineering projects and economic redistribution . . . and which practiced the politics of class envy and militant secularization. . . . This government was, moreover, increasingly characterized by a powerful, unelected bureaucracy and a cadre of virtually unremovable professional politicians whose manner of life increasingly diverged from that of ordinary citizens. If such is not convergence, then what is? The irony is that all these developments were bitterly opposed by those same conservatives who led the opposition to the Soviets abroad, and who denied the validity of convergence theory. They were championed by the same intellectuals who used convergence theory to explain why we were no better than the Soviets, or who even saw the Soviets as superior.

On the other hand, there is one place where the conservatives as a group (and I among them) have been proven quite wrong. Conservatives, generally, opposed the various educational-, cultural-, and economic-exchange programs with the USSR. . . . We suspected them as a vehicle for the subversion of our own naive society by theirs, with its tight control and supposed immunity to outside influences. Here is the real irony, for these exchange programs served as the silver bullet which delivered the wound which proved ultimately mortal. . . .

The exchange programs' greatest sponsors, of course, were the "progressives" and friends of Soviet power, operating from the same mistaken assumption which they shared with the conservatives about the ability of these programs to aid the Soviet cause. But both liberals and conservatives forgot that if we were exposed to the Soviets, then they, or at least their best and brightest, would be exposed to us in return. . . .

George M. Mellinger
Richfield, Minnesota

To the Editor of Commentary:

Owen Harries's otherwise fine article is marred by the fact that he seems to understand the events leading to the break-up of Communist power in purely secular terms. He writes that "One element conducive to making intellectuals receptive [to the totalitarian impulse] was the enormous prestige that science and technology had achieved by the early decades of the 20th century." Yet he himself, in attempting to account for the collapse of the Evil Empire, can do no more than point to the economic and political "technology" of the American policy-makers of the 1940's (Dean Acheson, etc.) and/or the success of the Reagan arms build-up. Indeed, Mr. Harries, and many other conservatives besides, seems to differ with the Left's *conclusions* about the engines that drive history, but not with the Left's secular interpretation of history itself.

Mr. Harries seems to share the liberal intellectual's world view, inasmuch as he fails, remarkably, to mention the profoundly important (and commonly neglected) religious side to the events surrounding the Communist debacle. In reckoning up the various forces that have contributed to this debacle, he does not take into account either the larger question of mankind's longing for transcendent meaning or certain more immediate factors of a religious nature that contributed to the demise of Communism (for example, the efforts of Lutherans in East Germany, of the Orthodox in Romania who teamed up with Baptist pastors, of Ukrainian Roman Catholics, of Jews in the Soviet Union, etc.).

This is a large oversight. It bears witness to the same indifference about the religious aspect of human life that has created the current lopsided, secularized vision of the world and contributed so significantly to the intellectual myopia that Mr. Harries himself laments. He correctly points out that both the liberals and the conservatives failed to understand the vulnerability of Soviet Communism, but one reason for this failure is that both these groups have been so thoroughly secularized.

Surely if one examines history from a religious point of view—the view that human beings are principally motivated by spiritual-moral yearnings, not merely economic or "scientific" motives—it should not be surprising that a godless and aggressively anti-religious regime could not successfully perpetuate itself.

Mr. Harries quotes G.K. Chesterton's famous remark that "those who have lost their faith in God do not believe in nothing, they believe in anything." Yet, sadly, he does so out of context in order to bolster his own secular vision of historic change. One might enlarge upon the aphorism and say that "those who have lost their faith in God . . . will believe in anything, including economic, psychological, scientific, and political explanations of what might be better understood as questions of the human soul—a soul created in God's image and endowed with free will."

Franky Schaeffer
Salisbury, Massachusetts

To the Editor of Commentary:

The thrust of Owen Harries's article is essentially fair and correct, but I would like to add the following observations.

1. The late Sidney Hook, . . . unmentioned in Mr. Harries's article, was both a cold warrior and a self-proclaimed socialist. For him democracy and socialism were not incompatible, although what he had in mind was true democratic socialism. . . .

2. Not only did nuclear weapons have the politico-military effect of keeping a hot war at bay, but, ironically, when the nuclear imbalance strongly favored the U.S. and the West over Soviet Russia and the People's Republic of China, the world was, if anything, closer to war.

3. Richard Pipes may have realized that there was a serious crisis under way within the Soviet Union, but he was wrong in thinking that the West could not bring about any change there, because of its inability to stand united and firm. . . .

4. While some liberals argued for accommodation with the USSR, many warned correctly of political overreaction, overextension in terms of resources, and a supererogatory military response.

5. Gorbachev's idea of a "common European home" was a failed propaganda ploy which endeavored to fix in the minds of Europeans the notion of an intrusive U.S. which had long overstayed its welcome. He would have preferred Europeans to view a reformed Soviet Union as a more acceptable international partner.

6. Contrary to Mr. Harries, few liberals, if any, were seduced by the

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illusion of unilateral disarmament. Evidently he is alluding to reckless radicals and utopians.

7. Finally, staying the course did work, . . . aided by the inherent political dissoluteness of Soviet Communism. But in no way was this feat accomplished by either the zeal or posturing of the "far Right," and its sometime conservative allies.

ELLIOTT A. COHEN
New York City

OWEN HARRIES writes:

My thanks for the various compliments.

Both Robert H. Haines and William Stern are concerned to deny Ronald Reagan any credit for the collapse of Communism. They argue that as Reagan's military build-up did not threaten the Soviet Union, it had no appreciable influence in changing Soviet policy. But that is a non sequitur. Frightening people is not the only way of influencing them, even with arms, and there are good reasons for believing that what Reagan's programs did was to introduce a sense of hopelessness and despair in Moscow. For those policies upped the ante decisively, and did so immediately after the Soviets had made an enormous and sustained effort to achieve strategic supremacy, disastrously neglecting everything else in the process.

Two of Reagan's initiatives—two that almost certainly would not have been undertaken by any other President, which takes care of the continuity argument advanced by Mr. Stern—must have been especially daunting: SDI and his intervention in the Afghanistan war. While Paul Kennedy was wrong about a great deal, he got it right as far as high tech is concerned: "Whenever an upward spiral in weapons technology has placed an emphasis upon quality rather than quantity . . . the Russian advantage has diminished." SDI—whether it would ever have "worked" or not—reflected such an upward spiral in an extreme, and, for the Soviet Union, an impossibly expensive form.

Mr. Haines recognizes the importance of the war in Afghanistan in precipitating the crisis of Communism, but seems to think that the way that war went had nothing to do with Reagan and his policies. On the contrary, the U.S. provision of Stinger missiles to the mujahedin from 1986 onward constituted "the most crucial change" in the war (Zalmay Khalilzad's judgment). And Reagan's willingness to apply the Reagan Doctrine on the very borders of the Soviet Union was incontrovertible evidence of the recovery of American confidence and will.

Joshua Jacobson makes a valid and important point; and I wish that I had thought of Mark Halpern's elegant way of disposing of Michael Kinsley.

Gordon Tullock says that he has two objections to my article, but I don't think he has. Certainly I have no problem with his first "objection" concerning intellectuals and the legitimacy of capitalism. What I said on that subject was meant to illuminate not capitalism but the state of mind of intellectuals in the 1940's.

As for Mr. Tullock's explanation of the disintegration of Communism—"what happened was that a man became dictator . . . who did not like the system"—the problem with it is that, at least until quite late in the game, Gorbachev insisted that he *did* like the system, and only wanted to make it work more efficiently. So he was either lying or he did not realize what he was setting in train. I tend to the latter view, and also believe that the perceived urgent need for greater efficiency resulted largely from the effects of Reagan's policies.

George M. Mellinger seems to have a slight reading problem. He begins by quoting a nonexistent passage from my article. He then feels it necessary to lecture me that "the future was not foreordained," though in my article I rejected at some length the view that "Communism was fatally flawed from the start and always carried with it the seed of its own destruction." Mr. Mellinger's defense of a particular version of "convergence theory" is interesting but unconvincing; it is like arguing that the states of health of someone suffering from cancer and someone suffering from a cold are converging because they are both sick. On the question of cultural exchanges, I think he is right that they were on balance a good thing but wrong in claiming that they proved any sort of "silver bullet." The intriguing thing

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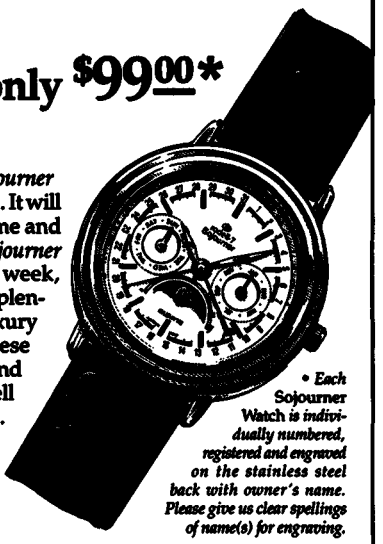

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about the collapse of Communism is that the decisive impetus came from above, not below—and the Politburo was not converted by cultural exchanges.

This last point also bears on Franky Schaeffer's argument about the relative importance of religious and secular causes of Communism's collapse. While it is true that religious faith strengthened in the Soviet Union as conditions deteriorated, there is no evidence of a surge of religious faith at the top, where the collapse was initiated. As far as modern Western intellectuals—the main subject of my article—are concerned, with a few notable exceptions they have been overwhelmingly secular. For what it is worth, I believe that "the engines that drive history" are various, and their relative importance changes with time and circumstances. Religion has been enormously important in some periods, but not, outside the Middle East, in the 20th century.

I sympathize with those like William Stern who resent the usurpation of the term "liberal." As Joshua Muravchik makes clear in the same issue of COMMENTARY [in his review of *Why Americans Hate Politics* by E.J. Dionne, Jr.], however, their real quarrel is with those on the Left who insisted that *they* were the true liberals, whereas the old "cold-war liberals" were neoconservatives. In an article proceeding at the level of generality that mine did, it is not possible to make all the distinctions that one would wish; but I was careful to qualify my characterization of liberals, both in time ("latter-day") and to allow for exceptions.

Two of the letters mention Sidney Hook and I should like to say that my failure to mention him on this occasion reflects no diminution of my great admiration for him.

The Ex-Soviet Union

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reading Vladimir Bukovsky's article, "What to Do about the Soviet Collapse" [September 1991], I was reminded of how much we all owe to Mr. Bukovsky and his friends, and how little consciousness there has been of this debt by our leaders. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn described the situation best in a recent interview when he said that "Only three years ago these people anticipated nothing and did not even believe a change was necessary."

One publication that can look with pride at its past is COMMENTARY. Here the opposition always had a forum dedicated to the struggle against totalitarianism. Liberal spokesmen, of course, never acknowledge this nor do they apologize for their own role in assuring the public of the "peaceful intent" of one notorious Soviet regime after another. Up until the end they made up a claque for Gorbachev and, of course, would never be so rude as to repeat Mr. Bukovsky's reminder . . . that it was Gorbachev who was responsible for sending troops into the Baltic states, Armenia, and Georgia, resulting in the deaths of many demonstrators, and that he was also responsible for attempting to break up demonstrations in Moscow. We are not supposed to remember that Gorbachev continued the policy of training, arming, and financially supporting world terrorism for a long time after he took power, . . . or that while our President was obsequious in his praise of the Soviet role during the Gulf War, in fact the KGB presence was maintained in Iraq and arms deliveries continued in spite of the embargo. As was explained at the time, "they had to fulfill their contracts."

Mr. Bukovsky correctly asks, "But why do Western policy-makers repeat the same mistake? Why do they constantly ignore the people and always support their oppressors?" Our Secretary of State did not even see anything morally wrong in a visit to KGB headquarters. Wouldn't it have been appropriate at least to have demanded an accounting from the KGB for its victims before making such a visit? What about details, for example, of the execution pits now being dug up in the Soviet Union and all over Eastern Europe? Will this knowledge now be put aside while the executioners go on living peacefully and collecting their pensions? . . .

The real heroes of the collapse of Communist totalitarianism are almost totally ignored. Where are the world honors, the liberal acclaim, for Bukovsky, Sharansky, Pavel Litvinov, Daniel Ginsberg, Andrei Amalrik, and the thousands of other dissenters? To honor them would, of course, mean that the "experts" would have to acknowledge their own perfidy. It has become respectable to acknowledge Andrei Sakharov, since his heart attack came at an opportune moment, but should there not be at least a moment's reflection on the fact that Gorbachev was one of his jailers? . . .

Is it extreme to demand punishment for crimes against humanity? Is there any charge made at Nuremberg that does not apply to the Communist leaders and their henchmen? Not so long ago those who apologized, rationalized, obscured were described as collaborationists. It is something to think about.

HENRY ADDIS
Westbury, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Vladimir Bukovsky is to be commended for his informative and timely article. He has performed a service by making it clear that glasnost and perestroika were created by the late Yuri Andropov as new forms of socialism to ensure its survival and renewal. It is refreshing to see a writer with his credentials chide the West for investing Mikhail Gorbachev with Jeffersonian traits.

Yet I am disturbed by what has been left unsaid. . . . Mr. Bukovsky seems to treat glasnost and perestroika as if they were short-term tactics that failed. I believe—to the contrary—that they are a long-range strategy of disinformation that is succeeding very well.

It is very likely that the "democratic" movements that now exist in Eastern Europe were initiated—or coopted—by the Communist parties and the security apparatus. There is no reason to assume that this is not also true of liberal movements within the ex-Soviet republics. It would be consistent with the dialectic, with Leninist tactics and strategy, and with past Communist performance. I do not doubt for a moment the sincerity of former Communist subjects in their desire for freedom, but I do very much doubt that they have or will retain control.

Looking at the situation without rose-colored glasses, there are no free countries in Eastern Europe. In Bulgaria and Romania the Communist party dissolved itself and was reinvented under a new name with a new generation of "reform" leaders, and in this form it now rules. In the other former satellites (and in Nicaragua) the regime is a coalition government with the Communists in charge of the mil-

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itary and the police, at the very least.

Money, technology, credits, most-favored-nation status are now flowing into Eastern Europe. And there is no mandate for a strong defense on the part of NATO or the United States.

The Communists have always excelled at understanding Western psychology. They can easily exploit the reluctance of citizens in a democracy to support large defense expenditures absent a clear threat; they can work with our tendency to see other cultures as mirror images of our own; they can manipulate our respect for covenant and redemption which derive from our Judeo-Christian roots. Is this Lenin's one step forward, two steps back?

GLORIA M. STEWART
Thousand Oaks, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The rapidity of change in the Soviet Union is well illustrated by the obsolete character of Vladimir Bukovsky's article in the September issue. Apparently the lead-time for a monthly magazine is longer than it takes for an empire to crumble. . . .

Mr. Bukovsky's simplistic view of what took place in the Soviet Union as a confrontation between "democracy" and totalitarianism, between the "people" and the dictatorship . . . should not be dished out to the readership of an intellectually honest magazine like COMMENTARY. The group of students, foreign-exchange prostitutes, punks, and Soviet mafiosi, supported by less than 1 percent of Muscovites, can hardly be considered the voice of the Soviet people. The other 99 percent or more continued to go to work, to go to school, to line up for food, and to visit the zoo during the August farce.

What happened after the outcome of the farce was no longer in doubt was the same fictitious "indignant protest by the people" (including cries for blood) that we have seen again and again in the land of victorious socialism, a protest against, in turn, the bourgeoisie, the kulaks, the wreckers, the spies, the cosmopolites, as well as against Sakharov, Pasternak, and Solzhenitsyn—against whoever might be selected as a target by those in power. The forms, the slogans, even the "indignant people" are the same. . . .

Mr. Bukovsky's short excursion into Russian history is misleading. Russia has not disintegrated like "the other empires," as he maintains, but neither did the others. Germany was not dismembered, England remained whole; both lost their colonies but the homeland remained intact. True, Austria-Hungary disintegrated, but one should not compare the artificial conglomerate of Vienna to Russia, a community of people that took over a thousand years to come into being. The dismemberment of Russia was planned by Lenin long before World War I and executed, at least on paper, by the same Lenin after the October Revolution. . . . But in spite of all his power, and the relentless efforts of the international community concerned for its own self-interest, Lenin did not succeed. During World War II the peoples of the Soviet Union did not fight for Azerbaijan or the Ukraine or Tatarstan . . . not for Communism and not for Stalin, but for one country, the Soviet Union.

What is going on in the Soviet Union today is a lawn sale that turned into a melee when the house caught on fire. In all the smoke, excitement, and confusion, the owners joined the buyers in plundering the house. It is the influence of international finance that now determines the fate of the Soviet people, not their will. Victor Gerashenko, the president of Gosbank, who was sacked because of his suspected part in the August farce, was reinstated in his job at the demand of Western bankers, according to the *Guardian*. The Soviet people had no say in the matter, and were not even allowed to prosecute the man. . . .

The naiveté of Mr. Bukovsky's explanation of the complex processes going on in the Soviet Union must be obvious to any serious thinker.

IGOR F. NIKISHIN
Naples, Florida

VLADIMIR BUKOVSKY writes:

Although my article was written and submitted for publication before the August coup, its analysis remains correct. I even anticipated an attempt to reverse previous policies and to introduce "something like" martial law which, as I

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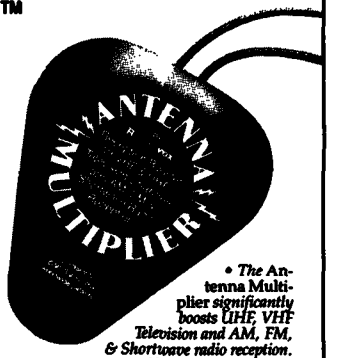

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thought, "Gorbachev might even try . . . out of desperation" and which "is hardly an answer since it would further aggravate the crisis by adding a mutiny in the army to the general discontent in the country." This is exactly what happened in August, except that Gorbachev preferred to stay in the shadows.

Indeed, clever schemes which in the end go wrong seem to be Gorbachev's trademark. The fact that they did go wrong is, in my view, beyond any doubt, although some readers seem to question it. We may be as suspicious of the "new democracies" as we like, but the weakening of the Soviet bloc is undeniable. Surely, handing over East Germany to what was formerly West Germany for a few billion dollars did not improve the bloc's "correlation of forces." The idea was to spread Soviet influence westward and to achieve the Finlandization of Western Europe; instead, the result has been a retreat eastward, with the Finlandization of Eastern Europe, and with former republics of the USSR acquiring the status of former East European countries. If nothing else, the Soviet ability to generate a threat of war in Europe, until very recently its main instrument of influence, has been eliminated.

The national movements in the republics may have been initiated as a ploy, but the people took them seriously. Again, if nothing else, this development has affected Soviet military might quite significantly, generating ethnic strife within the ranks and reducing the conscription rate by 20 percent. And as the republics have pushed for independence, the army itself has split. Up to 70 percent of servicemen stationed in Ukraine, for example, voted for Ukrainian independence in the recent referendum. And even as I write these lines in late December 1991, the Soviet Minister of Defense has just issued an appeal to the armed forces begging them "to stay loyal to the central command" because entire military districts have gone over to the republican authorities. If anyone can prove that this development has strengthened Soviet military might I will be the first to congratulate Gorbachev.

This, however, is only one aspect, and the most obvious one, of the disintegration caused by Gorbachev's clever schemes. The party, that potent instrument of control which used to be the backbone of the Communist regime, was outlawed and has since collapsed. Of course, there will be persistent attempts to revive it under one or another disguise, but they will be as futile as trying to put Humpty Dumpty together again. Let us not forget that even during Lenin's New Economic Policy (his perestroika), the party experienced a severe crisis whose most obvious signs were widespread disillusionment and a high suicide rate. And that was the party of professional revolutionaries which had just made a revolution and won a civil war! What then could have been expected of the current party of conformists made up of careerists and bureaucrats after many decades of unnatural selection? With all due respect for the opinions of some readers, I cannot imagine bureaucrats functioning underground.

Once the party disintegrated, the KGB, which was always its "armed detachment," became paralyzed too. Above all, there is the fact of six years without political repression which has affected society beyond measure. A whole new generation has grown up not knowing the fear of being imprisoned for political activity—and it was fear which used to be the KGB's most powerful ally. In March 1991 half-a-million Muscovites defied Gorbachev's ban on demonstrations and were not scared off by 50,000 troops deployed in the city. But I can remember a time when I was able to gather at most 30, 40, or 50 people for a peaceful demonstration in Moscow only with the greatest of difficulty. Not long ago, millions went on strike demanding Gorbachev's resignation, but I remember a time in 1962 when a strike over purely economic matters in the small town of Novocherkassk was drowned in blood. Today there are hundreds of completely uncensored newspapers and magazines being published and no one thinks twice about it, but I remember a time when a typewritten journal of uncensored poetry was enough of a crime to send my friend Yuri Galanskov to his untimely death in a labor camp. Today, when 90 percent of Ukrainians have voted for the independence of their republic, I cannot help remembering my cellmate Levko Lukyanenko, who was sentenced to fifteen years of hard labor for writing a letter suggesting that the Soviet constitution allows for the separation of Ukraine. After all that, do you want me to believe that the Communist regime has one chance in hell of surviving?

Finally, the collapse of the Soviet Communist party has triggered a similar collapse of Western Communist parties, and of the entire fifth column that had been created in the West. Now that anti-Communism is legitimate and even fashionable (despite the Left's lifelong efforts), the Western Left is in complete disarray. And what did the Kremlin strategists gain as a result of their schemes? Billions of dollars which could not even save them anymore, but only postponed their inevitable demise? Some reduction in the strength of NATO? If this is what Gorbachev intended, he does indeed deserve a Nobel Peace Prize.

No, my friends, let us not deny ourselves the pleasure of celebrating our victory. Let us not deny victory to the people and let us not regard them as fools. Their future may still be gloomy, and there are still forces around which will try to fool them, but the worst is behind them. Glasnost and perestroika were not intended as "short-term tactics," but they certainly proved short-lived. Never again will the monster of Communism be restored to its full strength. What really amazes me, though, in the behavior of the Western leaders is their incredible short-sightedness. Whatever the self-interest of the politicians may be, surely it does them no good to be exposed as complete idiots while they are still in office. So could they not at least have been more careful in their love affair with Gorbachev? Could they not have anticipated the inevitable at least half a year in advance?

I must confess that I am obviously too simplistic to appreciate the intellectual depth of Igor F. Nikishin, for I failed to grasp what he meant to say in his letter. So I will simply conclude by thanking Henry Addis in particular for his kind words and support.

Ethnic Leaders

To the Editor of Commentary:

Linda Chavez, in "Hispanics vs. Their Leaders" [October 1991], offers a painful contrast between the conduct of today's radical and separatist Hispanic leaders and that of earlier ethnic leaders. But she is mistaken if she assumes, as

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she appears to, that Polish, Italian, German, Jewish, and other ethnic leaders of the past behaved as they did because of some innate common sense or good judgment.

Assimilation is a bitter pill to swallow, and an immigrant group will swallow it only if it has to. But the melting-pot ideal, so important in digesting previous waves of immigrants, is now derided or ignored by elite American opinion. We can hardly expect immigrant groups to assimilate if every signal—from the government, the churches, the media, the schools—tells them they don't have to.

In other words, professional ethnics did not force the United States to accept multiculturalism and related foolishness—we have done this to ourselves. And only when society at large declares ethnic separatism and multiculturalism illegitimate can ethnic spokesmen be expected to preach Americanism to their followers.

MARK KRIKORIAN
Winchester, Virginia

LINDA CHAVEZ writes:

Mark Krikorian is certainly right that elite opinion no longer favors the goal of assimilating diverse racial and ethnic groups into a common culture. It is far from clear, however, that such opinion reflects a popular consensus. When voters have had an opportunity to endorse a common language, for example, they have overwhelmingly supported such measures. Indeed, a majority of Hispanic voters endorsed a constitutional amendment to make English the official language in California in 1986.

Most Americans take for granted that we will continue to have a shared, common culture; but they are unaware of how far adrift from that purpose public policy has strayed, especially in the education of minority children. Ignorance and apathy on the part of the general public have contributed to the success of self-appointed ethnic leaders in getting their separatist agenda enacted into public policy. Mr. Krikorian sounds an appropriate alarm.

PC on Campus

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

One tires after a while of seeing repeated, again and again, the misrepresentations offered by Dinesh D'Souza in his self-proclaimed "fight against political correctness" ["PC So Far," October 1991]. This piece follows the usual formula: some half-baked (and inaccurate) history, a rehash of selected (and dated) atrocity stories, a recitation of accounts from the popular press, all adding up to—*voilà!*—proof of a grand radical conspiracy that is threatening the very lifeblood of American democracy.

I offer just a few notes on Mr. D'Souza's article. While variants of the term "political correctness" may have been used by Marxists in the early part of the century, its ironic and self-mocking employment by many on the Left certainly was in vogue by the early 1970's, if not the late 1960's—a period he either conveniently skips or is too young to remember.

Mr. D'Souza asserts that "more than a hundred universities have instituted censorship codes which typically outlaw racially and sexually 'stigmatizing' or offensive speech." Indeed, a few universities have done so, but I know of no study or survey documenting the extensiveness he claims. Mr. D'Souza probably is referring to a survey done by the American Council on Education (ACE) two years ago which found that a majority of 355 campuses that responded have written policies on "bigotry, racial harassment, or intimidation." Speech codes were not mentioned in the question, nor can the data legitimately be interpreted to prove that those campuses have adopted such codes. Nevertheless, Mr. D'Souza and others, including Nat Hentoff and the ACLU, persist in misusing the survey findings to keep the PC pot boiling.

Finally, Mr. D'Souza totally misleads your readers about the findings of a more recent ACE survey, of chief academic officers, "most of whom," he claims, "offered a serene and untroubled portrait of the higher-education landscape and failed to see political correctness as a serious problem." In fact, only a tiny percentage of administrators reported that their campuses had experienced controversy over the political or cultural content of courses, public speeches, or lectures, or that they had heard complaints from faculty members about pressure to change the con-

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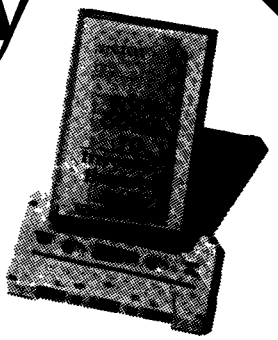

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tent of their courses. (Because the term is so vague and imprecise, "political correctness" was not mentioned in the question.) Yet in the same survey, fully 36 percent, including 74 percent of those at doctoral institutions, said their schools had experienced incidents of intolerance related to race, gender, or sexual preference during the 1990-91 academic year. Hardly the placid picture Mr. D'Souza says we painted, or evidence of a conspiracy to cover up campus problems.

Incidentally, the survey, an annual attempt to gauge trends on the nation's 3,400 campuses, included nearly 200 questions on issues such as faculty, finances, assessment, and enrollment. The major finding was that a large percentage of schools are suffering severe fiscal problems. Most administrators reported that their institutions had suffered budget cuts in the middle of the academic year, some more than once—further proof of their willingness to share bad news.

Hyperbole has its uses, but it should not be mistaken for serious scholarship or reasoned analysis. Dinesh D'Souza seems to be making a good living selling books and articles and making speeches in which he conjures up frightening scenarios of campus Reds run amok and the terminal decline of time-tested standards. His entrepreneurialism is to be admired. It's part of the American way. But my advice to your readers is simple: *caveat emptor.*

DAVID MERKOWITZ
Director of Public Affairs
American Council on Education
Washington, D.C.

DINESH D'SOUZA writes:

In the past four years I have visited or come across at least a hundred campuses which have legislated censorship codes, or amended their ubiquitous harassment provision to outlaw what is euphemistically termed "verbal behavior," i.e., speech. And if the American Council on Education were to conduct a survey of the more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the U.S., it would discover—contrary to David Merkowitz's assertion—that the actual number of institutions with censorship provisions is even higher than this. The good news is that courts have grown accustomed to recognizing sneaky and subtle efforts to impose censorship, so that the two model censorship codes, at the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin, have been found unconstitutional. Yet administrators continue to enact and enforce gag rules—as Vartan Gregorian did when he expelled a student from Brown University—while disingenuously denying that they are punishing free expression. Perhaps there is a case to be made for censorship, but apparently the censors and their apologists are too bashful to make it.

Of course administrators have a strong vested interest in denying the existence of political correctness or a host of related maladies; after all, they are ideologically hostile to alternate remedies, and they are jealously resistant to any criticism of their policies. Equally obviously, administrators are quick to discover incidents of assorted race and gender intolerance and bias which provide the rationale, or pretext, for a constellation of desired ideological remedies. In part by raising such a specter, university leaders can expand racial preferences, subsidize ethnic separatism, institutionalize double standards, and enforce censorship and politically-correct ideals.

The tone of Mr. Merkowitz's letter as well as that of recent documents issued by the Modern Language Association and the American Association of University Professors suggest that the university establishment is unwilling to take seriously some of the issues most central to the future of liberal education in an increasingly diverse society.

Jacob Katz

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Singer's "Homage to Jacob Katz" [October 1991] points the way to understanding the remarkable contribution of Professor Katz to Jewish scholarship. He is a remarkable person who retains a farsighted vision of Jewish historiography and studies which belies his advanced age.

Although long retired from the Hebrew University, Jacob Katz remains an active force in the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem. In that capacity he played a leading role this past October in a colloquium called by the Institute's three centers (New York and London in addition to Jerusalem). Professor Katz addressed the colloquium on the intellectual issues facing historians and archivists embarking on the project of making an inventory of Jewish archival materials in what was formerly East Germany. . . .

Like his recently deceased colleague, Salo W. Baron, Jacob Katz represents to me a synthesis of the grand academician and the pragmatic leader, a synthesis which has enabled him to help shape the modern understanding of our collective past.

[RABBI] ROBERT A. JACOBS
Executive Director
Leo Baeck Institute
New York City

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What Is Anti-Semitism?

An Open Letter to William F. Buckley, Jr.

Norman Podhoretz

DEAR BILL:

I have just read "In Search of Anti-Semitism" [*National Review*, December 31, 1991], and I am, quite frankly, relieved. The reason is that it did not confirm my deepest apprehensions upon first hearing the top-secret rumor that you were writing a very long essay by that title which would take a new look at the charges of anti-Semitism against Joe Sobran, Pat Buchanan, Gore Vidal, and the *Dartmouth Review*.

No doubt you are wondering, perhaps a little testily, why this rumor should have made me so apprehensive. Well, our mutual friend George Will once observed that one does not call a conference on "Whither Incest?" in order to reaffirm the prohibition against incest. Just so, it is reasonable to suspect that one does not necessarily go in search of anti-Semitism in order to find it. Anti-Semitism is, after all, easy enough to unearth without a search warrant; conversely, if one needs to search in order to find it, the possibility arises that it may not be there at all.

But I am being a little disingenuous here (though no more than I admit—see below—I have sometimes found you to be on the subject of anti-Semitism). The truth is that, after discussing the issue with you several times over the past ten years—first in connection with the response to Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and then more recently in connection with Sobran and Buchanan—I had come away with the sinking feeling that (forgive me, even though I can hardly forgive myself, for borrowing from the feminists) you just didn't get it.

But, you are fully entitled to ask me, what about your past record not only in spotting anti-Semitism when it appeared in your own immediate environs but also in fighting to expunge it? In your new essay, you remind us of that record, and the pride you take in it shines through. So it should; it is a very honorable record indeed.

You begin with a casual shocker: "I have some credentials in the area, among them my own father's anti-Semitism." You also confess that in 1937, at the age of eleven, you "wept tears of frustration at being forbidden by senior siblings" to accompany them on an adventure that consisted of burning a cross outside a Jewish resort. But later in life, putting away childish things, and having come to see in the wake of the Holocaust that "The age calls for hypersensitivity to anti-Semitism, over against a lackadaisical return to the blasé conventions of the prewar generation, which in one country led to genocidal catastrophe," you set your face most resolutely against anti-Semitism. When you founded *National Review* in 1955 and became its editor, you recall, the magazine

> declined association with anti-Semites, and indeed on one occasion went a generic step further. When it became clear, in 1957, that the direction the *American Mercury* was headed was anti-Semitic, I ruled, with the enthusiastic approval of my colleagues, that no writer appearing on the *Mercury*'s masthead, notwithstanding his own innocence on the subject, could also appear on *National Review*'s.

There can be no doubt that this was indeed a "generic step." Before you took it, the American Right had provided a rather comfortable home for anti-Semitic ideas, attitudes, and feelings, even if many on the Right were themselves, as individuals, "innocent on the subject." Thanks to you, however, a process of purgation, of cleansing, began. It is a process that still remains to be completed, but so far has it already gone that—as your successor to the editorship of *National Review*, John O'Sullivan, puts it in his introduction to your essay—"When anti-Semitism appears today outside the restricted confines of the country club . . ., it is almost invariably a left-wing phenomenon."

NEARLY 30 years later came the case of Joe Sobran, which you review at length in the first part of "In Search of Anti-Semitism." The salient points are that in 1986, Sobran, then a senior editor of *National Review*, wrote a number of syndicated columns which many people regarded as unambiguously anti-Semitic. Complaints were made both orally and in writing to him, to you, and to some of your colleagues. You responded in due course with an extraordinary editorial in *National Review* de-

NORMAN PODHORETZ is Editor-in-Chief of COMMENTARY.

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nying that Sobran was anti-Semitic but acknowledging that

> Any person who, given the knowledge of the reigning protocols, read and agonized over the half-dozen columns by Joe Sobran might reasonably conclude that those columns were written by a writer inclined to anti-Semitism.

Invoking the precedent you had set in connection with the *American Mercury* in 1957, you concluded by dissociating yourself and your colleagues "from what we view as the obstinate tendentiousness of Joe Sobran's recent columns" (even though those columns had not appeared in *National Review* itself). While you did not go so far as to drop him from your board of senior editors (that would come in 1991, over the Gulf War), you did forbid him to write in *National Review* on Jews, Judaism, or Israel.

As for my own role, which you now rehearse in great—perhaps too great—detail, it consisted at first only of being among those whose complaints had led to this outcome. Later I wrote an article for COMMENTARY entitled "The Hate That Dare Not Speak Its Name" [November 1986] which was mainly about Gore Vidal and the *Nation* (a case you take up in Part 4 of your essay) but which concluded with a section about Sobran and *National Review*. Later still, you and I had a rather sharp two-round exchange of unpublished letters about a piece by Sobran in defense of himself against me and some of his other critics that you published in *National Review*. "In Search of Anti-Semitism" contains extensive quotes from that exchange (with more space devoted to your letters than to mine—but who's counting?), and you naturally give yourself the last word with seven points in rebuttal.

My guess is that any reader of that section of your essay who is unfamiliar with "The Hate That Dare Not Speak Its Name" will get the impression that I had been one of those who, you report, were dissatisfied with the way you handled "the Sobran crisis." Curiously enough, in spite of the praise I lavished upon your behavior in "The Hate That Dare Not Speak Its Name," you seem to lapse at moments into that impression yourself. So let me make things Kristol clear (pun intended, naturally).

I thought then, and I think now, that you acted nobly in confronting a "beloved" (your word) disciple and colleague and trying to set him straight in private on a matter of great delicacy and difficulty. I thought then, and I think now, that going public with your chastisement of him when he remained obdurate was an act of high statesmanship. Had you lacked the courage to perform it, grave damage would have resulted to the reputation of your magazine and of the conservative movement it has done more than any other single force to establish as an influential presence in the mainstream of our political culture. I wondered then, and I wonder now, whether I would have had the stuff to acquit myself so well in an analogous situation.

In short, I have no hesitation in including your handling of Sobran on the list of your accomplishments in fighting anti-Semitism on the Right. (Until, that is, you tarnished that accomplishment by deciding to publish what I called his "unrepentant and disingenuous" rebuttal in *National Review*—about which more below.)

FINALLY, to complete the list of your struggles to cleanse the conservative movement of anti-Semitism, we come to the case of Pat Buchanan. To my mind, the section on him in "In Search of Anti-Semitism" is the best, and politically the most important, news about the essay. Here, to my gratified surprise, you conclude another long and careful review of the record by stating simply and clearly, and without any fancy dancing, that you

> find it impossible to defend Pat Buchanan against the charge that what he did and said during the period under examination amounted to anti-Semitism, whatever it was that drove him to say and do it. . . .

Again, if you are wondering why I should have been surprised, I would refer you to the column you wrote on the subject after Abe Rosenthal, in his column in the New York *Times*, had (as you put it) "gone ballistic" in charging Buchanan with anti-Semitism. Your own judgment at that time was that Buchanan was merely "insensitive to those fine lines that tend publicly to define racially or ethnically offensive analysis or rhetoric." You also seemed to endorse the view that what others took to be anti-Semitism was in reality an attraction in Buchanan to "mischievous generalizations." Worse yet, you concluded with a peroration which in my opinion came perilously close to falling into the abyss of moral equivalence in its assessment of the debate:

> The Buchanans need to understand the nature of sensibilities in an age that coexisted with Auschwitz. And the Rosenthals need to understand that clumsy forensic manners are less than a genocidal offense. . . .

You now reveal that you were uneasy with the points left unexplored in this column, and that this is what prompted you to investigate further and eventually to write "In Search of Anti-Semitism." Yet to tell you the truth, I saw little sign of any such uneasiness at the meeting of conservatives you called around that time to discuss Desert Shield. Inevitably, a good part of that meeting was devoted to the Buchanan question, and whereas a number of the non-Jewish participants were willing to say unequivocally that Buchanan's pieces on Desert Shield—along with some of the remarks he had made on television

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and in other columns dealing with Israel, American Jews, and Nazi war criminals—added up to anti-Semitism, you were conspicuously reluctant to join them. You kept raising questions and introducing distinctions that struck me (see above) as disingenuous and logic-chopping and that served more to darken counsel than to advance understanding.

Hence my gratified surprise when I read the results of your subsequent investigation of and reflections on the case of Buchanan. And I was all the more gratified to discover that Joshua Muravchik's scrupulously documented article in COMMENTARY, "Patrick J. Buchanan and the Jews" [January 1991], had helped you resolve some of your earlier doubts and reach your new conclusion.

IN THE cover letter accompanying the advance copy you sent me of "In Search of Anti-Semitism," you wrote: "I have a feeling you will agree with 95 per cent of my own conclusions, nuanced though they are—which means to run special risks. . . ." As it happens, 95 percent may be a little high, since I would have to deduct at least 5 percent alone for your positively talmudic (or should the word be Jesuitical—as from before the Jesuits went Left, of course?) whitewash of Russell Kirk. I acknowledge that he deserves your deepest respect as one of the founding fathers of the contemporary conservative movement. But that does not remove the anti-Semitic stench from his crack that "not seldom has it seemed as if some eminent neoconservatives mistook Tel Aviv for the capital of the United States."

Still, I do agree with a great deal of your essay. On your conclusions about Gore Vidal and the *Nation*, for example, there isn't a dime's worth of difference between us—though that may not be saying much, given that we have long seen eye to eye where the growth of anti-Semitism on the Left is concerned.

On the other hand, it may perhaps strike you as more significant that I am with you all the way in your section exonerating the *Dartmouth Review* of the charge of anti-Semitism. Some people are always complaining that false charges of anti-Semitism are just as bad as anti-Semitism itself. I doubt it, but even stipulating that in certain circumstances it may be so, it remains the case that for these people, virtually all charges of anti-Semitism are false. The reasoning seems to be that the accusation of anti-Semitism is so damaging that not even those who make blatantly anti-Semitic statements should be subjected to it. (Remember when the press refused to call even outspoken members of the Communist party Communists?) For some, nothing short of releasing the gas into the showers of Auschwitz constitutes anti-Semitism; and even that may not be enough—assuming (they quickly go on to add) that such a thing ever really happened; or if it did happen, that it resulted in as many deaths as "the Jews" claim it did.

Yet for once, in the *Dartmouth Review*, we have a genuine example of false charges of anti-Semitism doing damage to innocent victims. I see no good reason to rehash your excellent summary of the particulars of this case here, but there is one crucial point that needs to be extended and stressed.

In dealing with the *Dartmouth Review*, you return to the question you raised earlier in discussing Sobran and Buchanan of whether there is "a nexus between anti-Semitism and opposition to the policies of Israel." But this time—because the *Dartmouth Review* defended itself against the charge of anti-Semitism by emphasizing that it had always been a supporter of Israel—you raise the question in order "to probe the contrapositive assumption, namely that friendship toward Israel exonerates one from any suspicion of anti-Semitism." Your own position is that

> this is as a practical matter true, though not conclusively so. It is difficult to imagine someone who is anti-Semitic and pro-Israel. But such could exist, e.g., the (hypothetical) man who wishes Zionism to flower so that Jews in the rest of the world would be attracted to emigrate; so to speak, inaugurating an anti-diasporization.

Now, to be fair, your hypothetical man is not hypothetical at all; in the 19th century, the founder of political Zionism himself, Theodor Herzl, used this very argument with some success to enlist Gentile support. But that was in another country and those wenches have long since died. Today, I for one would insist, it *is* impossible "to imagine someone who is anti-Semitic and pro-Israel." But what about Solzhenitsyn, who is thought by many to be anti-Semitic and yet is certainly pro-Israel, possibly for the very reason that he wants all the Jews of Russia to go there? In an essay on Solzhenitsyn a few years ago, I grappled with this question, and came up with the following answer:

> . . . Solzhenitsyn has always defended Israel, even to the point of invidiously comparing the courage of the Israelis in the face of their Arab enemies with the appeasement of the Soviet Union by the Western democracies. To be sure, there was a time when it was possible for an anti-Semite to be a Zionist of sorts. . . . *But in our own day, Israel has become the touchstone of attitudes toward the Jewish people, and anti-Zionism has become the main and most relevant form of anti-Semitism.* So much is this the case that almost anything Solzhenitsyn may think about the role of Jews in the past—or even in the post-Communist Russia of his dreams—becomes academic by comparison.

This was published in February 1985, and pausing for a minute to express my awe at the realization in so short a time of Solzhenitsyn's

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dreams, which then seemed so far off, I want to call your special attention to the sentence I have now put in italics. For it is here that you and I have our sharpest disagreements, and it is here that I come to the bad news about "In Search of Anti-Semitism."

As between the two of us, the story goes back to "J'Accuse," the article I wrote for Commentary [September 1982] about the response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the two columns you then wrote in response to it.

I recall this old controversy not because I have any desire to awaken sleeping dogs, but because you yourself dig it up in your essay—and in a most peculiar way. Instead of tackling it directly, as you do with the other instances of debate between us which you describe in other parts of "In Search of Anti-Semitism," you drag it in via endless quotations from a piece by one Allan Brownfield attacking "J'Accuse," as well as a speech I made a few years later at a conference of Jewish journalists in Jerusalem.* Brownfield you identify as "a syndicated columnist who is himself Jewish," which is true as far as it goes but omits the more relevant information that he is violently anti-Zionist (being, in fact, the editor of an American Council for Judaism newsletter) and hence violently anti-Commentary and me.

Be that as it may, in one of the passages you reproduce, Brownfield repeats the widely circulated lie that in "J'Accuse" I equated any and all criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. You then make this comment:

> The episode to which Brownfield refers is well remembered by readers of Commentary. It was the general judgment of the concerned community (I was among the critics, devoting a column to the subject) that Podhoretz's fears and condemnations were exaggerated. . . .

Here either your memory is failing you (if so, welcome to the club) or you are once again slipping into disingenuousness (ditto). Whichever, there are three errors in the second of the two sentences quoted above: (1) The mail on "J'Accuse" showed that the "concerned community" overwhelmingly endorsed my thesis that the coverage of and comment on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon went far beyond unfairness and gave witness to "an eruption of anti-Semitism." (2) You devoted, as I have already indicated, not one but two columns to the subject, in the second of which you answered me and others who had complained to you about the first. (3) Neither you nor the other critics of "J'Accuse" thought that my "fears and condemnations were exaggerated," as you now so blandly phrase it. What you all thought, or at any rate said, was summed up in a letter I sent you on the day your first column appeared. Instead of paraphrasing that letter, I will follow the example you set in "In Search of Anti-Semitism" of quoting from private correspondence when it serves to illuminate. Here, then, are a couple of the relevant passages from my letter:

> Nearly fifteen years ago, I began earning the enemies you congratulate me on having by pointing to the prevalence of anti-Americanism on the American Left. This charge elicited . . . vituperation and evasive action: "Podhoretz smears anyone who criticizes America as anti-American." To this I would reply: "Yes, to be sure, there is such a thing as legitimate criticism of America, but the phenomenon I am pointing to is more properly called 'anti-Americanism.'"
>
> Now you, of all people, come along and make an analogous charge against an analogous argument. . . . I was careful to say in "J'Accuse" that *not* all critics of Israel's incursion into Lebanon are anti-Semitic; I specifically mentioned the New York *Times* editorial page as an example. Yet like my own critics on the Left . . ., you charge—and the Washington *Post* delightedly highlights the charge in bold type—that I "label as anti-Semitic the critics of Israel's campaign against the PLO in Lebanon."

Your response to this appeal was to write in your second column about two weeks later that

> although Podhoretz did not accuse every opponent of Israel's policies of being anti-Semitic, he was mistaken to the extent that he suggested that any of those he quoted (this side of the fever swamps inhabited by such as Alexander Cockburn) is motivated by anti-Semitism.

But I was never talking about *motivation*; I was talking about words on paper, and I said that both in the interest of intellectual honesty and for the sake of social hygiene, those words could, indeed must, be characterized as anti-Semitic. About five years later, in arguing with you about Joe Sobran, I again emphasized that the question of whether he was an anti-Semite could be left to those who presume to know the secrets of the human heart; as for me, it was enough to observe that he had written anti-Semitic articles.

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* I spoke, as I usually do, from notes, but the account of the speech in the Jerusalem *Post*, on which Brownfield relied, was reasonably accurate. Which is more than I can say for Brownfield's interpretation. Though you for some reason see fit to transcribe this piece of disinformation, you do at least assume that my speech, "coming to us third hand, contained qualifications . . . that Mr. Brownfield either is not aware of or else is disinclined to quote." Indeed it did. Thus, you would not know from Brownfield that the question I was asked to address was whether the editors of and contributors to local Jewish papers had any special Jewish responsibility. My answer was that they were free to disclaim it, but *insofar as they accepted such a responsibility*, it was to defend Israel rather than to join in the ideological campaign against the Jewish state—which I took (and take) to be a war against the Jewish people as a whole. What Brownfield did with this was use it to show that no one, not even "Israeli critics of Israel's policy in Lebanon," was safe from my reckless accusations of anti-Semitism.

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To clarify the distinction further, I will add that any person not motivated by anti-Semitism who wishes to avoid being called anti-Semitic need only refrain from voicing anti-Semitic ideas or sentiments. And might we not expect that such a person would be appalled if shown, through careful documentation and analysis, that he has blundered into anti-Semitism? For example, Nicholas von Hoffman, whose anti-Semitic remarks I cited in "J'Accuse," had the decency to be thus appalled at the sight of what he had said.

Sobran, however, was not only unrepentant, he was defiant. Like Pat Buchanan after him, who would declare "I don't retract a single word," Sobran stuck by his guns; and again anticipating Buchanan, he represented himself as an innocent victim of Jewish pressure, a courageous speaker of forbidden truths who, if the Jews had their way, would be censored.

You agreed when I said that Sobran was unrepentant. But you became (in your own word) "peevish" when I expressed my dismay at the fact that, in violation as I saw it of your promise to keep him from writing on Jewish themes, you nevertheless had opened the pages of *National Review* to his counterattack. Although you declared that I was mistaken in viewing this as a violation, what seemed to bother you most was not my public statement [in Commentary's correspondence columns, March 1987] that you had thereby "tarnished your previously honorable record on this sorry episode." What really riled you was my private remark (in a letter to your colleague Jeffrey Hart) that the publication of this counterattack lent "credence to all those like Marty Peretz [Editor-in-Chief of the *New Republic*] who have attacked me for being too easy on Buckley."

You felt then, and you evidently still feel, that I had committed a double sin against you here. First, I had shown excessive "docility" toward Peretz's criticisms of *National Review*; but more seriously, I had conspicuously failed to dissociate myself from his statement in a *New Republic* editorial that "the old Catholic Right has always had trouble with the Jewish problem. This explains why Buckley has made things so cozy for an unabashed bigot like . . . Sobran."

We differed then, and we continue to differ, on whether I had a duty to do unto Peretz (who after all neither worked for me nor spoke for me) what you had done unto Sobran. Indeed, you were not even mollified when I informed you in a letter that I was so outraged by the *New Republic* editorial in question that "I hung up on [Peretz] when he too remained unrepentant in response to my call of protest." All you knew was that I should have made a public disavowal comparable to the one you had made of Sobran's columns.

All right, then, I will make one now—of Peretz's allegations that (1) you were in effect letting Sobran off the hook, and (2) that you have "trouble with the Jewish problem" (a euphemism, I suppose, for a residual degree of anti-Semitism). In my judgment—a judgment richly confirmed by "In Search of Anti-Semitism"—the only trouble you have with the Jewish problem is that it will not let you rest, and that you feel called upon over and over again to struggle with it and think about it and talk about it and write about it. (I have the same trouble myself.)

But this does not mean that I agree with you that Peretz is guilty of "blind intolerance of nuance in any discussion of Israel." For my money he is all too tolerant of such nuance when it comes from his friends on the Left, especially Irving Howe and Michael Walzer. Furthermore—to throw you a nuance of my own of which I trust you will be tolerant—I myself have been upset by the irritable and needling editorials on Israel which have appeared from time to time in *National Review*. This is not because I have regarded them as anti-Semitic. It is because on general conservative principles I would have expected *National Review* to be friendlier to Israel than it seemed to be—as friendly, say, as some other Christians of conservative political bent (Jeane Kirkpatrick, Michael Novak, Bob Tyrrell, George Weigel, and George Will, to name only a few).

Marty Peretz is, of course, Jewish, but I have to tell you that, as I honor the likes of Kirkpatrick, Novak, Tyrrell, Weigel, and Will, I honor Peretz as well for his championship of Israel at a time when it takes real courage in liberal circles to stand up for that besieged and beleaguered country against the relentless ideological assault to which it is being subjected.

I also have to tell you in all candor that I cannot in all conscience disavow Peretz's charge that—to repeat, present company excepted—the old Catholic Right in general "has trouble with the Jewish problem." For in spite of the laudable efforts which have been made by the Church in recent years to eliminate anti-Semitism from Catholic teaching, the Vatican still has no diplomatic relations with the state of Israel. If this is not a symptom of trouble with the Jewish problem, what is it?

Which brings me back to the role of Israel in anti-Semitism today.

"In searching out the meaning of contemporary anti-Semitism," you observe, "it is useful to ask whether in order to qualify as a contemporary anti-Semite one needs to be anti-Israel." The answer is, not necessarily, but it certainly helps—though I reiterate that I would put it in terms that stress ideas and attitudes rather than motives or conscious intentions.

Here again, instead of paraphrasing myself, I will follow your example and quote freely from what I have written in Commentary on this subject in the past. First, on why and how Israel has become the main focus of anti-Semitism in a post-Holocaust world:

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[It] is a testimony to the persisting vitality of anti-Semitism [that], expelled more or less successfully from domestic society in the countries where once it flourished, [it] now reappears, suitably translated into the current language and modalities of international life, to deal with the phenomenon of a Jewish state among other states as it once dealt with Jewish individuals and communities living in states dominated by other religious or ethnic groups. ["The Abandonment of Israel," July 1976]

Or, putting the point in another way:

. . . it is perfectly true that anti-Zionism is not necessarily anti-Semitism. But it is also true, I fear, that the distinction between the two is often invisible to the naked Jewish eye, and that anti-Zionism has served to legitimate the open expression of a good deal of anti-Semitism which might otherwise have remained subject to the taboo against anti-Semitism that prevailed . . . from the time of Hitler until, roughly, the Six-Day War. ["A Certain Anxiety," August 1971]

Lastly, on how the process of refocusing works:

Historically anti-Semitism has taken the form of labeling certain vices and failings as specifically Jewish when they are in fact common to all humanity: Jews are greedy, Jews are tricky, Jews are ambitious, Jews are clannish—as though Jews were uniquely or disproportionately guilty of all those sins. Correlatively, Jews are condemned when they claim or exercise the right to do things that all other people are accorded an unchallengeable right to do.*

As applied to the Jewish state, this tradition has been transmuted into the double standard by which Israel is invariably judged. . . . [A]ll other people are entitled to national self-determination, but when the Jews exercise this right, they are committing the crimes of racism and imperialism. Similarly, all other nations have a right to ensure the security of their borders; when Israel exercises this right, it is committing the crime of aggression. So, too, only Israel of all the states in the world is required to prove that its very existence—not merely its interests or the security of its borders, but its very existence—is in immediate peril before it can justify the resort to force. ["J'Accuse," September 1982]

This point you now do get; you even call it "logically sound." But even though you now defend me against the canard that in my eyes "mere opposition to an Israeli policy constitutes anti-Semitism," you still seem to resist what logically follows from my "logically sound" point—namely, that criticisms of Israel based on this particular double standard, rooted as it is in the ancient traditions of anti-Semitic propaganda, deserve to be stigmatized as, quite simply, anti-Semitic.

I live in hopes that you will some day get that point as well.

BUT enough of the bad news about "In Search of Anti-Semitism." I began with the good news and with the good news I will end. All in all, with this essay you have burnished your record as a warrior against anti-Semitism, and most especially by your willingness to call Pat Buchanan's descent into anti-Semitism by its true and proper name. In so doing, you have taken another step in the campaign you inaugurated some 35 years ago to rescue the conservative movement from those who would besmirch it by spreading anti-Semitism in its name. If the people who lead the Left nowadays only had the decency and the courage to police their own ideological precincts in the same way and to the same degree, there would be little cause to worry as much as some of us do about a resurgence of anti-Semitism in this country—and not, alas, just the new kind that focuses mainly on Israel.

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* You refer to this passage no fewer than three times. The first time you astonishingly misinterpret it to mean that I classify "as anti-Semitic anyone who ascribes to Jews characteristics uniquely Jewish." The second time you summarize it accurately. But by the third time, you have forgotten the second and are back to the first ("*pace* Norman Podhoretz, it ought not to be considered racist to speak of group characteristics"). Is it any wonder, then, that you so often leave me feeling that, where anti-Semitism is concerned, you are uncharacteristically capable of obtuseness?

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The Miami Model

Mario Vargas Llosa

THERE is no place better than Miami to begin reflecting upon the relations between the Latin American countries and the United States. For what 30 years ago was a sleepy, mid-sized American town, populated largely by vacationers and the elderly retired, has become one of the most powerful metropolitan centers of the North American continent. Any visitor to the city immediately discovers that in addition to the gangsters, drug-runners, and exiles the movies and TV have taught him to expect, Miami also features a constellation of bright lights, a forest of skyscrapers, a maze of superhighways, new industries, a succession of trade shows—in sum, an entire world that by force of sheer effort has established its place in the vanguard of modernity.

But Miami has also become something much more than that: the point where two utterly different worlds meet and produce an unexpected symbiosis. While not wholly without tensions or an occasional incident, nonetheless it is in Miami that "Hispanics" and "Anglos" have finally come to understand one another and work together.

If this kind of collaboration had ever been consummated between Latin America and the United States, the Western hemisphere would be a very different place today. But in fact, history records nothing of the sort. Instead, the relationship has been characterized by multiple misunderstandings and antagonism; these in turn have played a large part in preventing the Latin American countries from breaking out of the vicious circle of underdevelopment—a state which is as much cultural and psychological as economic. The result is a very different and less favorable relationship between Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic America than has come to exist, for example, between the United States and either Western Europe or the Asian nations of the Pacific Basin.

THERE can be no doubt that a large part of the responsibility for this state of affairs lies with the "enterprising and forceful people," as the Cuban poet and patriot José Martí called them, who "ignored and disdained" their southern neighbors, to whom they dispatched imperial expeditions, either to bend local governments to their political will or to defend the interests of certain investors, such as the notorious United Fruit Company. These actions, as well as the evident support which Washington lent to so many dictators and cooperative satraps south of its border—Somoza, Trujillo, Pérez Jiménez, Stroessner, Batista, Odría, Rojas Pinilla, many of whom, North Americans need to be reminded, were invited to the White House and decorated by the government of the United States—eventually generated a strong feeling of antipathy and even hatred among the democratic sectors of Latin America. Thus was the ground prepared for the anti-American campaigns successively carried out by the so-called "progressive" forces of the continent.

Nonetheless, these objective historical reasons do not and cannot entirely explain the suspicion with which many Latin Americans have viewed the United States. There are other, more subjective and more elusive factors, which have to do with ignorance, resentment, and the inevitable envy generated by the juxtaposition of the poor neighbor and the rich, the weak and the powerful, one civilization which has stagnated or regressed and another which seems to lurch forward with an irresistible force.

Either because of ignorance or mental laziness (which prevents someone from taking the trouble to check out his ideas and beliefs with objective reality to see whether they are true or false), many Latin Americans harbor a superficial vision—one which approaches caricature—of the complex society of the United States, particularly of its interest groups, its public opinion, its government, and the diversity and subtlety of its political machinery. This ignorance—in many ways the mirror image of the benighted notions that have frequently prevailed concerning Latin America among U.S. political elites—is the root of no small number of our conflicts and misunderstandings with Washington. It has prevented many of our governments, interest groups, and leaders from successfully defending their causes or their points of view before Congress, the White House, and U.S. public opinion.

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All Latin American governments without exception have sought support in Washington, a support which, they habitually complain, has either been denied altogether or granted only with great reluctance. But only in the last few years, and certainly far behind other countries, have Latin American leaders started to discover what, for example, Israel has long known—that the best way to advance their cause in the United States is to master and participate in the rites, the habits, the grandeurs, and yes, the miseries, of its political system.

It is a lesson that we Latins have put off learning for far too long, but which, to judge by the recent conduct of such leaders as Violeta Chamorro of Nicaragua, Alfredo Cristiani of El Salvador, and Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico, we are finally beginning to put into practice. Evidently, it has not been easy for us. In contrast to public life in our own countries, where the sound and the fury often replace argument and the art of persuasion—a difference demanded, apparently, by our romantic temperament—in the United States, a society whose traditions are at once Puritan and formal, what yields results, above all in the political arena, tends to derive not from spectacular gestures, thundering rhetoric, confrontation, or brilliant improvisation, but rather from the action of lobbying, a practice so exotic to our own environment that the word itself virtually defies translation into Spanish. By lobbying I mean nothing sinister or irregular—simply persistent, discreet effort; patient, systematic preparation; pressure applied at the most opportune moment to the media or to key congressional committees or political personalities.

It is still possible to find in the average Latin American a curious love-hate relationship toward the United States, our rich and powerful neighbor. On the one hand, the country of Hollywood and skyscrapers stands as a kind of permanent reproach to people who in their own countries know only the difficult and insecure existence of underdevelopment (inflation, unemployment, political and social violence, a steady drop in living standards). From this angle of vision, the United States is something of an earthly paradise, a promised land of opportunities, where one can easily get rich, possess both cars and apartments of a superhuman scale, and live amid the last word in technological conveniences—just the way things appear to be on American television or in the movies. It does not matter that the reality is considerably more prosaic than the dream: what cannot be disputed (and in this, the statistics are conclusive) is that in spite of all the difficulties he may encounter in the United States, the Spanish-speaking immigrant has a better chance of prospering there than in his country of origin, whether the latter be Cuba's totalitarian dictatorship or the solid democracy of Costa Rica. This is the lodestone, the magnet of fascination that attracts and will continue to attract to the beaches of Florida, the cities of California, the fields of Texas, or the huge industrial complexes in and around New York and Chicago the huddled Hispanic masses against whose force of entry there seems to be no customs house, no law, no frontier post capable of effective resistance.

The obverse of this Latin American sentiment of admiration is a gnawing complex of inferiority/superiority. It finds support in a fallacious argument—a pure product of ideology—that the Latin American intelligentsia has managed to convert into a maxim accepted without reservation by everyone from the distinguished jurist to the illiterate peasant in the fields—namely, that the American bonanza is the product of *our* sweat and *our* tears. "Their" wealth—that is, the wealth of the gringos—is the direct product of our poverty—the Indians, blacks, mulattoes, or people of mixed races who belong to "the other America." First "they" pillaged our part of the continent; now they discriminate against and look down upon us. But we, although poor, are in some ways superior to our *nouveaux-riches* neighbors: thanks to the antiquity of our history; the glories of pre-Hispanic culture; our magnificent colonial past; our more refined and aristocratic manners, so superior to "their" democratic gaucherie.

Yet if the proximity of a powerful neighbor has been the source of many iniquities and abuses for the weaker party, it has also been, at the same time, an ideological and moral charter by which the Latin American exonerates himself from any sense of responsibility for the evils which have afflicted (and continue to afflict) our countries. To attribute to the United States the authorship of everything bad which happens to us—from our poverty to our military dictatorships; from corruption, the chaos of our institutions, and the fragility of our democratic systems to the cyclones and tidal waves that devastate our port cities (as I once heard the Nicaraguan poet Ernesto Cardenal explain to an ecstatic audience in Lima)—all this has the advantage of enhancing the comforts of victimhood and exempts us from all blame for our apathy and political ineptitude. Why try to *do* anything, after all, if nothing that we attempt is capable of changing our situation? Why move a finger, indeed, if everything good and bad that happens to us is determined by the Ogre/Santa Claus of the North?

The influence of the intellectual in spreading these attitudes has been simply enormous. Indeed, as the Mexican poet and Nobel laureate Octavio Paz recently remarked in an interview published in the prestigious Madrid daily *El País*, the intervention of Latin American intellectuals in politics has been, in general, "catastrophic" for our continent. Certainly no other group has contributed so hugely to feeding

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the hatred of the United States, and propagating the most negative stereotypes about it.

Nor is this tradition of denouncing the "colossus of the North" and attacking its "empire" confined to intellectuals of the Left; it is dear to those of the Right as well. To be sure, they have employed quite different arguments. For the Right, in the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th, the United States represented the crassest form of materialism, the mercantile spirit, the sacrifice of all things lofty and spiritual to the needs of a vulgar and selfish pragmatism. In *Ariel* (1890), the Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó characterized the North as the Saxon Caliban, to which he opposed the idealistic Prospero of the South—representative of the noble, disinterested humanistic ideal, e.g., the Spanish and Latin cultural traditions of his and other neighboring countries. This famous essay was the fount from which successive intellectual and artistic generations of Latin Americans drew their principal nourishment. Or there is the case of the Peruvian Francisco García Calderón, who spent much of his life in Paris—he even wrote about half of his books in French—while holding up for admiration the "Latinity" of South America in contrast to the commercial philistinism of the Anglo-Saxon North. (It was around the turn of the century, in fact, that the term *Latin* America first came into general use, displacing "Spanish America" to refer to Madrid's former American colonies.)

It is an arresting historical curiosity that until about World War I the Latin American intellectual elite was almost always right-wing in politics and culture—deriving inspiration from either French or Spanish masters. Of the latter—historians, men of letters, and artists who defended uncritically our continent's obvious Spanish inheritance, from the Castilian tongue to the Catholic religion—many were contemptuously, even violently, anti-American. The father of the modernist movement of 20th-century Latin American literature, and arguably one of the greatest poets of the language, the Nicaraguan Rubén Darío, even posed the question in one of his most famous poems: "So many millions of men and women—will we *all* finally speak English?"

After the Mexican Revolution (1910), Latin American intellectuals underwent an important transformation. That is to say, they became first and foremost "progressives" (a term which, in Latin America at least, encompasses a vast range of possibilities, from the pallid roseate hue of a social democrat all the way to the blood-red of a Trotskyite, Stalinist, Maoist, or Castroite, or any of the deeper or lighter shades of socialism in between). They relieved their more conservative predecessors on the "anti-imperialist" ramparts, infusing the latter's somewhat primitive anti-Americanism with a new, more sophisticated economic and political content. The ideological baggage of any committed Latin American intellectual now became not merely condemnation of Washington's military activities in Central America and the Caribbean, but also denunciation of any American investment in the region as imperialist exploitation pure and simple. And starting in the 1950's, a new theme was added: "cultural penetration," whose purpose, we were told, was to pervert native cultures and deprive Latin American countries not merely of their raw materials but also of their "souls." (A richly documented book by the Chilean Ariel Dorfman—now enshrined as a professor at Duke University—purports to show how Donald Duck, yes, Walt Disney's Donald Duck, was the cornerstone of this evil cultural conspiracy.)

From this point on—and even more so after the Cuban Revolution in 1959—denunciation of the United States became a daily professional exercise for a considerable number of Latin American intellectuals. Granted, in more recent years this orthodoxy was practiced rather mechanically and without any real conviction, somewhat as a matter of public display to impress other, less worldly members of the church—a matter of taking refuge in outward forms to avoid one's expulsion for loss of faith. But the fact remains that anti-Americanism is still one of the indispensable requirements for acceptance in the Latin American intellectual class. Indeed, without it, one can hardly hope to prosper, since the cultural establishment is still, for all practical purposes, a branch of the political Left, regardless of glasnost, perestroika, or anything that has happened since.

Oddly enough, this profession of faith—hatred for the United States disguised as anti-imperialism—nowadays is actually a rather subtle form of neocolonialism. By adopting it, the Latin American intellectual does and says what the cultural establishment of the United States (and by extension, elsewhere in the West) expects of him. His proclamations, condemnations, and manifestoes, with all their grace notes and glissandos, serve to confirm all the stereotypes of the Latin American universe cherished by much of the North American cultural community. Even more, the arguments of the Latin American provide new raw material and new moral underpinnings to the case made against *his* government, *his* culture, or *his* country by the "progressive" American—whether liberal, social democrat, or just plain Democrat—the only kind of American, generally speaking, who seems to have any interest in Latin America at all (since, with exceptions that can be counted on one hand, like Jeane Kirkpatrick or the Catholic theologian Michael Novak, American conservatives maintain a lofty disinterest in almost everything which occurs south of the Texas border).

Thus, one of the most exquisite paradoxes surrounding the abundant rhetoric of so many Latin

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American sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, ethnologists, journalists, poets, essayists, and novelists—all of whom denounce the "cultural penetration" by the giant of the North—is that this rhetoric is the best (and perhaps the only) proof that such "penetration" exists at all. For without it, how could so many learned and creative writers manage to win the grants, invitations to speak, subventions, travel expenses, book contracts, stage productions, art exhibits, etc., with which the cultural establishment of the United States subsidizes and enthusiastically stimulates those who have turned anti-Americanism into nothing less than a source of livelihood?

There is no question that this system—which has not been deliberately hatched by a Machiavellian group of conspirators, but rather is the result of a convergence of illusions, frustrations, alienations, and ideological prejudices on the part of intellectuals on both sides of the divide—has played a considerable role in corrupting the Latin American intelligentsia, often condemning it to a sort of schizophrenia in which private conduct invariably diverges from public—that is to say, what people write and to what they put their signatures. For it is a rule nearly without exception that when the most ferocious anti-imperialist intellectuals in Latin America are obligated to go into exile, or (more frequently) decide to do so voluntarily, they never seem to seek refuge in the countries most congenial to their ideological preferences—Cuba, the People's Republic of China, the ex-Soviet Union, Vietnam, etc. Instead, driven presumably by a collective masochism, they always lurch toward the "entrails of the monster," to use a term coined by José Martí. There, where on the face of it one would least expect them—in the monster's universities, foundations, research centers, publishing houses, electronic media—are they best able to continue (excellently compensated, though with somewhat mitigated zeal) their anti-imperialist apostolate. Nothing comes closer to exemplifying the old phrase, "hatred that seems so strongly to resemble love."

Meanwhile, for the average citizen of the United States, the vision of the Latin American countries in their totality also suffers from an excess of stereotypes and misinformation. Paradisiacal beaches and lush female flesh undulating to sensual rhythms alternate with gunmen, terrorists, narco-traffickers, torturers, and a promiscuous, violent mass of humanity often assumed to be recently descended from the trees. This is the collective vision derived from news reports and films consumed by the larger American public.

To be sure, there is a countervailing force to these excesses. Thus, in many American research institutes it is possible to find today the best specialists on almost all the aspects of contemporary Latin America, and certainly the best specialized library collections wherein to study specific subjects dealing with the southern continent. (I can attest to this on the basis of personal experience: while researching the background for my novel *The War for the End of the World,* I came upon a priceless collection of pamphlets and newspapers dealing with the Canudos revolt in Brazil at the Library of Congress in Washington—this, after long and fruitless searches in Brazil itself.) But this effort to understand Latin America's problems and study them in depth, however valuable and important, continues to be very marginal in its impact, with virtually no effect whatever on public opinion and, what is perhaps more serious still, on the political class of the United States.

2.

As THE old song goes, however, there is no evil that endures for a hundred years. The particular evil in question has already outlasted its appointed time, and today there are more possibilities than ever before to do something about it. Why is that? Because today we face two unprecedented factors that ought to work decisively in favor of a more intelligent relationship between the two halves of the continent.

The first is the proliferation in Latin America of civilian, democratic regimes inspired, as American society was inspired from the very beginning of its independent life, by the rule of law and political freedom. We have heard much talk these days, and rightly so, of the implosion of totalitarianism in Eastern Europe and its subsequent decomposition in the Soviet Union. Far less have we heard about the collapse, one after another, of all the dictatorships in Latin America except for the one in Cuba. It is, nonetheless, the most important phenomenon in our republican history, and represents a unique opportunity. For once, Latin America seems about to emerge from the vicious circle of revolutions and barracks revolts, freeing our countries to undertake the struggle against poverty and backwardness, tying their destinies to what they have belonged to, in truth, since the arrival of Columbus: the democratic West.

The utopian model of violent revolution is in full decline, even in those countries—Peru, El Salvador, Colombia, and Guatemala—where insurgent groups still exist; in three of those four countries, having suffered a significant loss of popular support, armed revolutionaries have been forced to open serious negotiations with elected governments. And throughout the continent, popular sentiment is unmistakable: overwhelming majorities for democracy, and a clear-cut rejection of both Marxist revolution and military dictatorship. Even in Cuba, in spite of an exceedingly repressive system and ferocious efforts by the regime to smother any evidence of protest, we can perceive ever-greater signs of popular resistance to Castro's tyranny. One example is the manifesto

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signed in June 1991 by seventeen Cuban intellectuals resident on the island—several of them members of the National Union of Writers and Artists—asking for amnesty and free elections.

It goes without saying that this battle is far from won. Political democracy does not guarantee economic development; that requires a free market, a genuine opening to the world economy, legal guarantees for private enterprise and property, and a minimum of efficiency and morality on the part of the state, which the majority of Latin American countries are still very far from having attained. The truth is, in fact, that with the exception of Chile, and perhaps also Mexico, a poor or even disastrous economic situation is a sword of Damocles suspended over the democratization process of many countries south of the Rio Grande.

On the other hand, slowly but ineluctably, a new and important idea has gained considerable ground: namely, that to achieve full and harmonious development, political liberty must go hand in hand with economic freedom. The democratic regime of Patricio Aylwin in Chile has maintained without alteration the free-market economic model of its predecessor, assuring Chile the highest growth rate in Latin America. And in Mexico, the government of Salinas de Gortari has carried to completion a notable program of privatization and liberalization that is beginning to bear fruit. Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Peru are all taking steps—admittedly, with some hesitation and occasionally with missteps or backslidings—in the same direction. The once unassailable philosophy of inward-looking development and economic nationalism, popularized so successfully by Raul Prebisch and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (and followed by almost every Latin American government, democratic or dictatorial, in the 60's and 70's, with such catastrophic consequences) languishes virtually without defenders. On its ashes a new Latin American economic consensus is arising, reflecting a more modern awareness of the need for a competitive marketplace and economic freedom.

This development is of extraordinary importance, and if the United States grasps the point and acts accordingly, it will inaugurate a new era in relations that will overcome the suspicions and confrontations which have inflicted so much damage on the continent. In politics, it is indispensable that the Latin Americans who have opted for freedom become convinced that the United States is on their side, and not on the side of its historic enemies—minorities nostalgic for a military coup whenever they perceive their interests in danger.

In the economic area, it is crucially necessary as well that the two ends of the hemisphere work together. Here I have in mind not aid, although there are still many Latin Americans who—caught up in the old way of thinking—still expect Washington to solve their economic problems for them, by forgiving their debts and granting them as many new credits as they may ask for. But this is clearly not in prospect, and even if it were to occur, it would be the worst possible medicine for the young democracies of the South. *Their* job is to put their own houses in order—straighten out the labyrinths we call economies, bring their budgets more in line with their resources, clean up their administrations, and create stable rules capable of attracting foreign investment. The role of the United States—faithful to the framework which inspired its own Constitution—can be no other than to open its markets and stimulate trade with its neighbors, rather than raising and maintaining obstacles against it. A modest proposal, admittedly, but if it is put into action, the benefits for both sides will be nothing short of immense.

The incorporation of Mexico into a free-trade area, such as now exists between the United States and Canada, may well be the point of departure for a continental economic revolution. In spite of the tremendous opposition which this initiative has awakened in both countries among protectionist and nationalist groups and interests, it is evidently going to negotiate its way past all obstacles and become a reality.

As for the other Latin American countries, they ought not to view a U.S.-Mexico free-trade zone as something which threatens them with isolation and marginalization. Rather, it should be viewed as an incentive to accelerate their own economic reforms, and modernize their own systems so that they can join this arrangement with all deliberate speed. Such an agreement cannot stop at Mexico: on the contrary, it has to be seen as the first phase of what eventually will be a Western Hemisphere Common Market.

In spite of the new democratic orientation of their countries, many people in Latin America still do not understand that this option amounts *to taking an unambiguous position among the* open societies of the free world, whose natural leader is the United States, as opposed to remaining in the moral slums represented by totalitarianism and third-world dictatorships. On this point there should be no hesitation. Although the Western countries have sometimes betrayed ignorance or arrogance in their dealings with us, now that we have opted for democracy these free countries are clearly our natural allies—for reasons of principle, and for pragmatic reasons as well. The notion of "nonalignment" is ridiculous: for the same reason that, as Arthur Koestler once wrote, one cannot be "neutral" in the face of the bubonic plague. What kind of neutrality is it that defends, for example, the tyranny of Fidel Castro or the despotism of Saddam Hussein in the service of "third world solidarity"? For anyone who declares himself a democrat, and expects others to believe him, there is no possible neutrality between free-

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dom and dictatorship, of whatever type and regardless of where it may be found: one option excludes the other, like oil and water.

For their part, Washington and the capitals of the other Western countries will have to make a serious effort to respect and understand our problems and our views. Fortunately, in addition to the huge democratic wave which has swept across Latin America, there is another powerful instrument by which to accomplish this difficult task. And here I come to the second of the two factors working toward a more intelligent relationship between the two Americas: the community that is already so strongly present in the United States, and has in particular played so important a role in the city of Miami—the "Hispanics."

3.

"EVITA," as I will call her, is a Bolivian. She arrived in Miami ten years ago with a tourist visa which she obtained from the U.S. consulate in La Paz. She remained as an illegal, minding children, cleaning houses, and ironing clothes, until seven years later, because of a traffic accident, the police discovered her existence. The state of Florida began deportation proceedings against her, and she had to turn to an immigration lawyer who—for $1,000 in fees—managed to delay the expulsion for a year.

When the act of deportation appeared imminent, the same lawyer put her in touch with an agency that found her a husband—a Cuban naturalized as a U.S. citizen—who, for $2,000, agreed to marry and eventually divorce her when she obtained her own papers. The entire operation required a minimum of two years. The arrangement did not quite work out as anticipated: in addition to being an alcoholic, Evita's husband managed to die on her the year of their marriage. Once again she faced the prospect of expulsion. She was saved by an amnesty decreed by the U.S. government in 1990 which favors illegals long-resident in the country. Today she is a resident with full privileges of the law, and earns a good living ironing clothes ten hours a day (having given up cleaning houses or taking care of children) in the plush residential suburb of Key Biscayne.

She told me her story, in between shirts and underwear, in the home of a Colombian industrialist and rancher, Don César P—, who has been led by his country's inveterate violence (he has already had a son kidnapped and been forced to pay a hefty ransom) to move here, whence—with the telephone and the fax machine—he continues his business activities. Don César has brought his entire family along, and all of them seem to have adjusted to the warm breezes of Florida. The most reluctant of all to leave Colombia was his wife Esther. She still misses her relatives and friends at home. But she already has a new circle in the Miami area, all Latin American women, with whom she plays bridge and golf, and also reads a new novel every month.

Neither Evita nor Esther feels at a disadvantage in not speaking English. The truth is, in Miami one hardly needs to. There are two Spanish dailies, two Spanish-language television networks, countless radio stations that transmit only in Spanish (and play Latin music), and many theaters and cinemas that show Spanish-language productions. No famous singer from Spain or Latin America fails to make frequent appearances in Miami. Miami also boasts a festival of Spanish-language theater and cinema, and a book fair where the Spanish-language publishers are as well-represented as those who print in English. There is even a Latin carnival that every year attracts a million people along Eighth Street—dancing traditional dances and singing traditional tunes, disguising themselves as folk characters of the different Latin American countries.

The experience of exile tends to increase one's loyalty to one's roots, sometimes to religious extremes. Where else but in Miami has anyone celebrated the 80th anniversary of the famous bolero *"Quiéreme mucho"* of the Cuban composer Roig? Nearly 2,000 spectators jammed the Dade County Municipal Theater to hear the singers Orlando and Mara—both raised in exile—who for three hours revived the golden oldies of Cuban popular music, in homage to the octogenarian *"Quiéreme mucho"*; on occasion the audience stood up to join them in song, reverently—and even ecstatically.

Indeed, for the first time in the history of the United States—a country of immigrants—a wave of foreigners (the Cubans) have not dissolved in the melting pot. Rather, they have retained their cultural identity while participating actively in the economic life of their country of adoption. And this "Latin" imprint has been the draw for many thousands of Colombians, Nicaraguans, Salvadorans, Panamanians, Peruvians, and so forth (including a large number of writers, painters, composers, and academics), all of whom are now firmly in residence.

How many such people live in the Miami area? According to official statistics, there are two million residents in Dade County (which is to say, metropolitan Miami), half of whom are Hispanic. But the census does not always count with total accuracy the burgeoning number of illegals, who—like Evita—cleverly and tirelessly negotiate past all imaginable obstacles to enter and remain here. So it is possible that Spanish-speakers now actually exceed speakers of English in the county. Nor is this a passive community: it is very well organized, and has elected mayors, councilors, and (recently) a member of Congress; it knows how to use to its

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advantage in Washington the complicated mechanisms of the American practice of lobbying (for which they have invented a useful Spanish word, *cabildeo*). Not long ago, its pressures prevented the confirmation of a federal judge selected by President Bush (the man was accused of belonging to a club which refused to admit Jews and Hispanics).

A fair number of these immigrants are domestics like Evita, and they correspond to the classic image of the expatriate: the man or woman who must start over again at the lowest level, accepting second-class citizenship, marginal discrimination, and exploitation by the establishment. But in Miami such people are not the rule but the exception.

In fact, the transformation of Miami from a small, lethargic Southern city into a great financial center is due in large measure to Hispanic immigrants—people who are regarded, above all in the Anglo-Saxon world, as lazy and inefficient. In Miami they have shown that they can be as productive at wealth-creation as at composing boleros or dancing the salsa. True, many of the Cuban expatriates who arrived on these shores were professionals, facilitating their more rapid adaptation. (According to the last U.S. census, of the 21 million Hispanics who live in the United States, the one million Cubans have the highest per-capita income. The others do not even come close: the Cuban average is $38,497 a year; the other Hispanics, $29,197.) But Cuban success in Miami cannot be attributed merely to a high level of professional preparation. For there are no such things as lazy or hard-working classes or cultures; what there are, rather, are systems—rules of the game, laws, practices—which stimulate effort and initiative, or stifle them. Miami is an instructive example of how, in a favorable environment, Hispanics can prove to be as tenacious, disciplined, and productive—and as good businessmen, to boot—as Anglo-Saxons or Japanese.

The Latin American community has an equally important presence in several other parts of the United States. In California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and Manhattan, the Hispanic influence is immediately evident: in culinary preferences and the way people carry themselves; in the music on the radio and the customs of social interchange; in the oleaginous penetration of the Spanish language in businesses, theaters, services, schools, and on the street. Quite possibly the traditional capacity for absorption which, together with liberty, has created the greatness of the United States, will end by finally integrating this community, as it has done so successfully with Italians, Poles, and others. But there is reason to think that when this integration finally occurs, it will reciprocally have opened the minds and spirits of many North Americans to the realities of Latin America, so that, with the 20 million Hispanics forming a bridge, a point of encounter, there may finally emerge among the peoples of our common continent—instead of the hatred which sometimes resembles love, or the love-hate sentiment that is still the rule—a normal relationship, at once evenhanded, creative, and mutually beneficial.

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Clarence Thomas and the Blacks

Arch Puddington

THE appointment of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court may well mark an important moment in the debate over racial policy in America.

For now, of course, the long-term significance of the Thomas confirmation has been obscured by the controversy over last-minute charges that the nominee sexually harassed his subordinate, Anita Hill, while both of them were serving at the Department of Education and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).* And two other factors have also served to blunt the appointment's impact.

First, Thomas, apparently on the advice of White House aides mindful of the unhappy fate of Judge Robert Bork, made a calculated decision to avoid serious discussion of any issues which might provoke pointed ideological clashes during his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee. That this maneuver was essential to a favorable Senate confirmation vote is open to debate. But without question, the strategy of avoidance of intellectual conflict assured that the nation would receive only passing glimpses of the man whose outspoken opinions were central to his appeal as a public official.

Second, President Bush's decision to sign the 1991 Civil Rights Act—with its endorsement of the disparate-impact theory, a doctrine crucial to the more sweeping affirmative-action decisions of the past two decades—has confused the debate over racial preference, provided additional ammunition to politicians like David Duke whose appeal is rooted in the exploitation of white racial resentment, and undermined black conservatives, Clarence Thomas most of all, who have been engaged in a serious effort to develop new, nonracial criteria for affirmative-action policies.

Yet however unsatisfactory things may seem in the aftermath of the confirmation "process," in the long run the Thomas appointment may well signal the symbolic beginning of a new and more productive period in racial affairs. If so, it will perhaps bring us nearer to a resolution of the often bitter arguments over the strategies for black economic advancement, the degree to which racism is responsible for black-white inequality, and the proper role of race in government social policy.

Even at a minimum, however, the Thomas confirmation should validate a degree of intellectual pluralism in these discussions that is unprecedented in the post-civil-rights era. Pluralism, in this case, means just that: a genuine diversity of views rather than a pendular swing from Left to Right. While such a development in itself would not necessarily lead to the forging of a national consensus, it would certainly mark a vast improvement over the current state of affairs, in which attempts by any black to diverge from what the current crop of black leaders defines as the truth are treated as acts of betrayal and serious discussion is therefore foreclosed.

To be sure, the Thomas experience could easily lead one to draw precisely the opposite conclusion. Thomas, after all, was treated by his black critics as the ultimate pariah, a black man with an allegedly anti-black agenda and a set of personal motives which were charitably described as selfish and, among his more extreme adversaries, downright evil.

Yet, paradoxically, the vendetta-like quality of the anti-Thomas offensive could provoke the question of whether it was the prospect of a conservative black being named to the Supreme Court which his critics really feared. Or was it, rather, the possibility that the conservative nominee's ideas might prove persuasive to important segments of their own black constituency?

IN THIS regard, consider the revealing statement of Congressman John Conyers of Michigan, one of several members of the Congressional Black Caucus to testify officially against confirmation. Conyers told the Judiciary Committee of fears of "being placed in the position [where] a member of the Supreme Court ... will ... be quoted extensively and used against us." As this comment suggests, many black leaders would have preferred a white con-

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* For a discussion of Anita Hill's role in the Thomas confirmation process, see "Why Anita Hill Lost" by Suzanne Garment in the January COMMENTARY.—ED.

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servative nominee, whose views would have been automatically suspect among blacks, to a black conservative like Thomas; as another member of the Black Caucus, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton of the District of Columbia, asked, why even appoint a black to the Supreme Court if he is a conservative?

Taking this line a bit further, others drew a parallel between Thomas and Booker T. Washington, the controversial turn-of-the-century spokesman for black self-help, whose stature as a leader, some charged, derived from the patronage of politically powerful whites. Likewise, Thomas was accused by Ronald Walters, the chairman of Howard University's political-science department, of serving as a front man for a white conservative elite pursuing a "cynical strategy . . . to supplant liberal black political leadership with a more conservative genre." In Walters's view, the "extraordinary public credibility" achieved by Thomas and other black conservatives is almost solely due to their having been anointed by white patrons. This process, he adds, "is an oppressive impediment to the true expression of black mainstream opinions."

On this latter point Walters could not be more mistaken. As the Thomas debate makes abundantly clear, the greatest menace to the intellectual honesty that is essential to the creation of "mainstream opinions" stems from an atmosphere of intolerance toward dissent from the orthodoxy of the day. But the word intolerance does not begin to describe the reaction to the Thomas nomination. For while other Supreme Court choices have had their credentials called into question and their ideas characterized as extreme, none before has been subjected to the kind of systematic and often vulgar campaign of character assassination that was directed at Clarence Thomas.

At the core of the anti-Thomas strategy was an attempt by his black opponents to deny the nominee the right to call himself black. According to Ronald Walters, blackness "ultimately means more than color; it also means a set of values from which Thomas is apparently estranged." Derrick Bell, a Harvard law professor, claimed that Thomas "doesn't think like a black." Judge Bruce Wright of New York called Thomas "emotionally white." Others took note of Thomas's marriage to a white woman; Russell Adams, chairman of Howard University's department of Afro-American studies, saw this as "a sign of his rejection of the black community."

Indeed, declared New York Congressman Charles Rangel, Thomas "goes against the grain of everything black people believe in" and is "completely against everything that is in the interest of minorities." Rangel added that as an opponent of affirmative action who had nevertheless benefited from a special program to enhance minority college enrollment, Thomas had "dedicated his life to seeing to it that those benefits end with him." Another familiar theme was struck by Congressman Louis Stokes of Ohio when he proclaimed that "the difference between Judge Thomas and most black Americans who have achieved in spite of poverty, adversity, and racism is that most of them have not forgotten from whence they have come."

Nasty as they were, these remarks paled in comparison to the testimony of Congressman Major Owens of New York. Owens called Thomas a "monstrous negative role model," and compared the reaction in the black community to the Thomas nomination with "how the French would have felt if the collaborative Marshal Pétain had been awarded a medal after World War II, or if in Norway Quisling had been made a high official in the government."

In addition to racial insults, the anti-Thomas campaign involved a more subtle effort to convince Americans that there was something mentally wrong with the man. Indeed, Thomas was arguably the object of more amateur psychoanalysis than any government official of recent memory, with the obvious exception of Richard Nixon—and this, despite the nominee's having been in the public eye only briefly.

The most ambitious effort along these lines was a lengthy evaluation of Thomas's psychological state in *Time* magazine, forbiddingly entitled, "The Pain of Being Black," which amounted to a tendentious "explanation" of why a black American would maintain such peculiar opinions as opposition to racial preference. While the author, Jack K. White, denied believing that "Thomas or any other black who disagrees with racial preferences and hiring quotas is suffering from a mental disorder," the article, which consisted primarily of observations by black psychiatrists, left the clear impression that the reverse was the case. White quoted Professor Ronald Hall to the effect that many blacks, suddenly thrust into positions of responsibility in predominantly white environments, undergo a "bleaching process," whereby they identify with the whites around them and reject their black heritage.

In a similar vein, two prominent authorities on the special psychological problems of blacks, Alvin Poussaint and Price Cobbs, described a new "disorder," dubbed Token Black Syndrome, or TBS, in which blacks who are the first in their family to attend college come to accept the traditional negative stereotypes of blacks and, in compensation, devote their energies to meeting the standards of white society. Blacks afflicted with TBS, we were informed, frequently suffer an exalted sense of their own achievements along with contempt for the presumed shortcomings of others of their race, including family members, who they believe are less gifted and thus inferior.

Then there was the concept that Thomas and

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his fellow black conservatives are, as Dr. Poussaint put it, "opporTOMists"—that is, blacks who embrace conservative and, it was implied, anti-black positions in order to secure favors from white conservative patrons. Derrick Bell similarly said of black conservatives that they "run the gamut from opportunists to out-and-out hustlers."

UNDER the sway of a wave of such anti-Thomas invective on op-ed pages and television news forums, whites tended to overlook the fact that a majority of blacks held Thomas in considerable esteem. But for his black critics, who were well aware of this fact, it was a source of profound discomfort. Their uneasiness escalated as the details of Thomas's biography began to emerge: the boyhood of poverty, the record of hard work and high scholastic achievement, his gratitude to the grandparents who raised him and the nuns who taught him, his initial determination to forge a career in nonracial arenas, his independent-mindedness as a public official. (Another biographical detail, that Thomas was awarded principal custody of his son after his divorce from his first wife, and raised the boy as a single parent, was curiously never stressed in press accounts.)

By any standard it was an impressive story, and it greatly complicated the plan to demonstrate that this son of rural Southern poverty did not qualify as a real black. Eventually, the critics, white as well as black, elaborated two lines of response.

First, it was asserted that Thomas's life had absolutely no bearing on his fitness as a Supreme Court Justice, and that on other grounds he was not well qualified. This appeal to strict meritocratic standards, however, was all too clearly hypocritical coming from the same people who had fought so hard against the eminently qualified Robert Bork. More to the point, no one, and certainly not Thomas's opponents, had ever before claimed that race, religion, social class, early political experiences, place of origin, or other personal characteristics should be given no weight whatsoever in the Supreme Court selection process. On the contrary, liberal commentators had frequently complained about the absence of "diversity" on the high court, just as they had consistently been demanding that everything else in society, from jobs to university admissions to chapters in history textbooks, be apportioned along racial and gender lines.

As for the general black support Thomas enjoyed (a *USA Today* poll gave him a black approval rating of over 50 percent at the time of his appointment), it was claimed that this represented nothing more than racial solidarity—brothers cheering on a brother—and did not at all imply an endorsement of Thomas's philosophy. Almost immediately after the appointment was announced, for example, Edolphus Towns of New York, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, explained that "most black Americans do not know the record of Clarence Thomas," and added that attitudes would change "once this information gets out." Congressman Conyers elaborated on this theme during the confirmation hearings, claiming that Thomas's initial support began to wane "as we began to reveal the difficulties with his track record . . . not just from the Congressional Black Caucus, but through the church leadership, the civil-rights community, the labor community, women's organizations, the understanding of him has completely changed those polling figures."

Conyers, of course, was wrong. Black support for Thomas held relatively steady at over 50 percent throughout the 100-day-plus process, and reached nearly 70 percent at the time of the confirmation vote. And it did so in spite of the aggressive, well-organized campaign to "Bork" Thomas—that is, to discredit him through the mobilization of cause groups and a high-pitched negative publicity onslaught, the very tactics which led to the earlier Senate rejection of Bork.

At the very least, this means that most blacks did not see Thomas's conservatism or even his skepticism about race-based affirmative action as a threat to racial progress. It also may mean that some of Thomas's controversial ideas struck a chord among blacks, particularly among an emerging middle class increasingly prone to question the traditional liberal verities on issues like crime, welfare, schools, and the rights of parents to make decisions regarding their children's well-being.

OF COURSE Thomas is by no means the first black of independent mind to have earned the racial elites' scorn and opprobrium. Among intellectuals, Thomas Sowell, too, has been called a Quisling, Glenn Loury a traitor, and similar epithets have been hurled at Shelby Steele and other dissenters from orthodoxy. In Thomas's case, the abuse was more public and sustained because of the high position at stake. But the ugly pattern had been established well before his nomination to the Supreme Court.

There is, however, reason to hope that those who follow in Thomas's footsteps may not be forced to endure similar ordeals. To begin with, the nation learned in the course of the Thomas debate that a strong measure of intellectual diversity does exist within black America, that black thought is far from monolithic, and that this is a reality which the current black leadership cannot wish away, much as it would like to. While Congressmen and civil-rights lawyers made clear their loathing for Thomas's ideas, many other blacks expressed respect for the man and enthusiasm for his approach to civil rights, and did so quite visibly in newspaper articles, appearances on television news forums, and in testimony before the Judiciary Committee.

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Significantly, the roster of Thomas supporters went well beyond the relatively limited group of recognized black intellectuals who had been functioning as the principal spokesman for conservative views. Those speaking up for the nominee included liberal journalists, businessmen, clergymen, law-enforcement representatives, academics, university presidents, government officials. And this does not take into account the appearance of Thomas's EEOC colleagues who testified on his behalf during the Anita Hill segment of the confirmation hearings: smart, articulate, black women whom no one would dare accuse of "estrangement" from their racial background—precisely the kind of successful professionals whose very existence is a tribute to the civil-rights revolution.

Nor can the impressive impact of black conservatives and, for want of a better term, iconoclasts on American intellectual life any longer be ignored. Whether it is Thomas Sowell on the global implications of racial preference, Shelby Steele on the psychology of victimhood, Stephen L. Carter on demands for black intellectual conformity, or Stanley Crouch on cultural themes, those who have self-consciously shifted away from the political and cultural traditions of racial protest have made the most influential contribution in recent years to the debates over race, art, economics.

In no single area has the influence of Sowell, Steele, and the others been more pronounced than the racial-preference debate. Steele's *The Content of Our Character*, with its theory that blacks and whites are engaged in a subtle contest over the mantle of victimhood, is now universally cited as a basic source in any discussion of affirmative action. A more recent contribution is Carter's *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*, notable for its cogent observations on the damaging psychological repercussions of race-conscious policies.

Unfortunately, such writings have had a negligible impact on the country's black leadership. The frenzied campaign against the Thomas nomination can be traced to two issues—abortion and affirmative action. But it was affirmative action and affirmative action alone which aroused the civil-rights universe; Thomas's black antagonists hardly mentioned his positions on school desegregation, criminal justice, or, for that matter, abortion, all issues of considerable concern to blacks and which appear regularly on the Supreme Court docket.

Nor did they seem exercised over the questions which inflamed the white Left, such as whether a journal on whose advisory board Thomas served had published anti-abortion articles by writers other than Thomas (a special concern of the *Nation*), or whether the nominee displayed "distinct political obsessions" about, among other things, free-market economics (a *Nation* writer was particularly disturbed by Thomas's having declared: "Commerce, like sports, teaches us the conditions of freedom"). It is safe to say that had Thomas endorsed a moderate version of affirmative action, along the lines favored by Republican Senators John Danforth and Arlen Specter, there would have been little or no opposition to his confirmation on the part of the civil-rights establishment.

SUPPORTERS of preferential policies have often been charged with trying to impose them through fundamentally undemocratic methods in order to avoid open debate on an issue on which Americans hold strong and altogether negative sentiments. And indeed, the Thomas hearings revealed a Democratic party almost terror-stricken at the prospect of a thorough public airing of this highly divisive issue. Despite the months of publicity devoted to Thomas's pointed hostility to race-based policies, despite affirmative action's having been very much on the congressional agenda due to the debate over the 1991 Civil Rights Act, despite the fact that the boundaries of preferential policies have been largely determined by the Supreme Court, despite all this, the Democratic members of the Judiciary Committee—Kennedy, Metzenbaum, Biden, Simon, *et al.*—studiously avoided extended dialogue with the nominee on the issue. Instead, the committee's Democratic members badgered Thomas about his concept of natural law, delivered lectures on coat-hanger abortions, and spent fruitless hours trying to elicit his views on *Roe* v. *Wade*. It eventually fell to Republican committee members like Orrin Hatch and Arlen Specter to discover that in fact Thomas had a nuanced approach which favors affirmative-action programs based on economic status rather than skin color.

This position could hardly be described as motivated by mean-spiritedness, and it was certainly not without precedent. The civil-rights leader Bayard Rustin and the liberal Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas were among those with strong civil-rights credentials who called for policies which would give preference to the poor rather than to racial or ethnic categories. Such a class-based strategy, however, has practically no support among today's black leaders. Thus, for example, during the Thomas hearings, Major Owens likened affirmative action to reparations, similar to the payments Jewish survivors received from the West German government as atonement for the Holocaust. "In the case of war, one nation loses a war, they have to pay," Owens noted, adding that he did not favor cash payments, but rather preferential policies as America's form of reparations for the historical injustices visited on blacks.

ONE suspects that there are many blacks who admire Clarence Thomas not simply for what he has achieved, but also because they find his phi-

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losophy appealing. One also suspects that black support would have been even more substantial had the nation witnessed the real Clarence Thomas, with his original and compelling voice, instead of the caricature presented by his detractors and the flat and uninformative image projected by Thomas himself during the hearings. For in articles, speeches, and interviews, Thomas comes across as a man of strong conviction whose views on racial matters reflect a combination of high principle and common sense.

Thus, on the one hand, he seems pessimistic about the prospects for a society free of racism, having told journalist Juan Williams:

> There is nothing you can do to get past black skin. I don't care how educated you are, how good you are at what you do—you'll never have the same contacts or opportunities, you'll never be seen as equal to whites.

But, on the other hand, Thomas believes that for blacks a more important message is the danger of an obsession with racism. As he told the 1985 graduating class of Savannah State College, blacks are burdened not only with racism, but "with a recent tradition that almost requires you to wallow in excuses," and has urged the students: "Do not succumb to this temptation of always blaming others."

Furthermore, Thomas's skepticism about affirmative action is a reflection of his overall view that massive government instrusion into black life has actually exacerbated the inner-city crisis. He challenged

> those who proffer a governmental solution to show me which group in the history of this country was pulled up and put into the mainstream of the economy with governmental programs. . . . Show me the precedent for all this experimentation on our race.

Similarly, Thomas has declared that

> those who attempt to capture the daily counseling, oversight, common sense, and vision of my grandparents in a governmental program are engaging in sheer folly. Government cannot develop individual responsibility, but it certainly can refrain from preventing or hindering the development of this responsibility.

Then, too, there are such emotional questions as the rights of criminal defendants and issues touching on moral values, on all of which Thomas has outspoken opinions that are more in keeping with dominant black opinion than are the views of his critics. Take as a representative instance the Reverend Buster Soaries, a self-help advocate who once worked for Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH, and who supported Thomas. In testifying on the nominee's behalf, Reverend Soaries provided the Judiciary Committee with a much-needed, although unfortunately ignored, perspective when he noted that far more criminal-justice cases come before the Court than those involving abortion or affirmative action. He added, pointedly, "Crime has become such an enigma that black people in black neighborhoods have become afraid of black children," and made clear that, in his experience, the priorities set down by the Black Caucus and other anti-Thomas organizations were not the priorities of the inner city:

> It is an enigma today that in New York City the greatest concern among the people that I speak to is the fact that the Board of Education has decided to distribute condoms to teenage children without their parents' permission. . . . It's an enigma because, on the one hand, we have the question of individual rights; and, on the other hand, we have the issue of the integrity of the family. . . . In the city of Detroit, I went to speak at a public high school where we had another enigma. The enigma was that parents were pressing the school to install metal detectors because children were bringing weapons to school. Civil libertarians and some advocates of civil rights oppose the parents who are attempting to protect their children in the name of individual rights. The point is we have such a complex situation today that is much larger than the black-white situation of the civil-rights [era].

WHAT Reverend Soaries is pointing to is a widening rift between community-based black leaders and liberal organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), some of which were in the forefront of the opposition to Thomas. Community leaders in Detroit and elsewhere, for example, have clashed with civil-liberties lawyers over single-sex schools for black boys, while in Chicago civil libertarians opposed a campaign to remove guns from public-housing projects.

Even more strikingly, in Atlanta, when a series of children-killing-children incidents spurred the city's political leadership to impose a teenage curfew, the local chapter of the ACLU opposed the measure and vowed to fight it in court. Michael Hauptman, the Atlanta ACLU president, decried the ordinance not only as "constitutionally wrong" and "morally wrong," but also as racist, even though the curfew had been proposed by a black councilwoman, adopted by a black-dominated city council, championed by high-ranking black police officials, and generally supported by the city's black population.

The persistence among liberal groups of an ideology which equates strict anti-crime measures with racism has alienated broad segments of local black leadership, and not merely self-help advocates in the Clarence Thomas mold. One even hears calls for strict codes of civil conduct from blacks with a reputation for militant nationalism,

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such as Calvin O. Butts, III, a Harlem clergyman best known for his angry denunciations of white racism. Reverend Butts has endorsed the enforcement of laws against public nuisance, gambling, and public urination, has called for a teenage curfew and the confiscation of cars in which loud music is being played, and has attacked Mayor Dinkins for supporting the New York school board's condom-distribution plan because of its abrogation of parental rights.

At the same time that local community leaders have embraced the themes of personal responsibility and self-help, black intellectuals have been engaged in a reassessment of the legacy of none other than Booker T. Washington. The snickers which formerly greeted Washington's stress on economic development have been replaced by a good deal of respect, at least in some quarters. Washington, of course, still has his detractors. Thus in the epilogue to a report by the NAACP which called for a rejection of the Thomas nomination, the eminent historian John Hope Franklin suggested that the Thomas self-help message was as much a fraud as Washington's had been in his day, with the obvious implication that blacks today are as subject to oppression as they were after the collapse of Reconstruction.

Where Franklin's evaluation once would have gone virtually unchallenged, now many blacks reject the view of Washington as an Uncle Tom, and a growing number point to Washington's strictures on education, moral character, and economics as entirely relevant to the problems of the inner city. Those who recognize the value of Washington's philosophy include conservatives, moderate nationalists, latter-day separatists, and a few whose main identification has been as committed integrationists. A diverse group, to be sure, but one that has been drawn together by the failure of a substantial segment of black America to enter the economic mainstream, and a sense that state-engineered integrationism has contributed to the deterioration of once-viable black institutions.

HERE it is important to distinguish between those genuinely attracted to the self-help philosophy and those who feel obliged to endorse the concept for fear of being accused of fostering black dependency on the state. That black leaders feel somewhat defensive on this score was made clear during the Thomas controversy, when the nominee's critics frequently prefaced their remarks with the avowal that they too were committed advocates of self-help and moral revitalization. Having gotten this pro-forma declaration out of the way, the speaker would invariably proceed to a harsh assault on Thomas, who really does believe in self-help.

It is this kind of behavior which makes one wary of sweeping conclusions about changes in the ideological atmosphere. It is perfectly conceivable that the black leadership will respond with renewed fury when its intellectual hegemony is next challenged. And it must also be acknowledged that the growing pluralism in black intellectual life has not carried over into the realm of electoral politics, with the most telling statistic being that, of 436 black state legislators, only three are Republicans.

Nevertheless, it does seem evident that an increasing number of blacks are moving beyond the affirmative-action controversy, which they see as increasingly irrelevant to the future of their race, and paying renewed attention to the crisis of the black urban poor. Some identify the core problem as crime, and demand sweeping and severe measures in response. Others concentrate on the plight of children without fathers; still others have taken up the challenge of rebuilding black businesses, schools, hospitals, parks, and other neighborhood institutions.

We do not know the precise strength of this unorganized movement for black neighborhood revival, but the anecdotal evidence indicates that it is growing throughout America's large cities. The ideological roots of this movement are diverse, and some of the ideas it has spawned—most notably Afrocentric education—are foolish, and even dangerous. We do not even know whether seemingly worthy experiments like the privatization of government-owned housing projects, inner-city enterprise zones, or educational vouchers will benefit the urban poor; Clarence Thomas himself has referred to some of these proposals as "gadget ideas," and has called instead for an all-out assault on crime.

Be that as it may, the support Thomas received from the majority of black Americans—support extended in the teeth of his scandalous treatment by the established racial leadership—along with the growing competition of ideas over the future or race relations, together suggest that a process may be under way which will finally point America in the direction of a solution to our longstanding racial dilemma.

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How Important Are the Dead Sea Scrolls?

Robert Alter

THE real mystery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is a consequence of the perishability of parchment and papyrus. Since the 19th century, the Middle East has yielded up wave after rich wave of literary, legal, annalistic, and cultic materials, many of them in hitherto unknown languages. Through them it became possible to reconstruct, sometimes in vivid and surprising detail, the variegated ancient world before, behind, and around the Bible. The texts from this world were generally written on clay tablets or incised in steles. When unearthed by the archeologist's spade, they might often be chipped or cracked or broken, but the solid material of inscription sufficed to carry into the present these precious messages from a past three or four millennia removed. From ancient Israel proper, we have innumerable names on seals, fragments of writing or writing exercises on shards of pottery, and one continuous version of the Priestly Blessing in a silver filigree ornament, but the consecutive literature of the culture was committed to scrolls made of locally manufactured parchment or often (as the Israeli scholar Menahem Haran has persuasively argued) of papyrus imported from Egypt. These materials, alas, like the acid-impregnated paper of many of the books on our own library shelves, were destined to be turned into dust by time's inexorable chemistry. Thus, the oldest integral manuscript of the Hebrew Bible goes back only to around 1000 C.E., nearly twelve centuries after the writing of the latest biblical book, Daniel, and nearly two millennia after the composition of the earliest biblical texts.

It is against this background that the accidental discovery in 1947 by a Bedouin boy of ancient Hebrew scrolls in a cave overlooking the northwestern edge of the Dead Sea set off a firestorm of scholarly and then popular interest that has still not abated. Over the past year, the Dead Sea Scrolls have again been in the news week after week, for reasons I will summarize, in front-page articles, editorials, op-ed pieces, and passionate letters to the editor. In the heated atmosphere of journalistic coverage, the scrolls have been described as "the greatest archeological find of the 20th century," which is a perhaps defensible but certainly debatable proposition. More accurately, they have been called "the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times," for it is chiefly manuscripts, as I have indicated, that have not come down to us from the written records of the ancient world. The bone-dry climate of the Dead Sea region and the protection of many of the scrolls in sealed earthenware jars had proved to have the most fortunate, perhaps unique, preservative effect. Who wrote these manuscripts, what they might have to say, and, above all, what is their intrinsic value as spiritual or literary productions are matters that very much remain to be resolved.

In order to understand the great hullabaloo over the Dead Sea Scrolls in the fall of 1991, it will be necessary to retrace briefly the often told story of the initial acquisition of the scrolls and their subsequent history of jurisdictional entanglements. The first Bedouin finders brought seven complete scrolls to Bethlehem and sold them for a pittance to a Christian-Arab dealer in antiquities. He in turn conveyed four of these to the Metropolitan of the Syrian Jacobite Church in Jerusalem, and sold the other three clandestinely to Eleazar Sukenik, an archeologist at the Hebrew University, in the very heat of battle between Israelis and Arabs in 1948. In 1954, Metropolitan Samuel took his four scrolls with him to the United States and placed a discreet advertisement for their sale in the *Wall Street Journal*. Yigael Yadin, Sukenik's son, and himself on the way to becoming a distinguished archeologist, acquired the Metropolitan's scrolls for $250,000 through the cover of an intermediary (Samuel would hardly have sold them knowingly to an Israeli). Thus the seven original scrolls, all subsequently published, came under Israeli jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, in the most literal sense, no stone was left unturned in the Qumran region where the first find was made. By the early 1950's, extensive archeological digs were initiated under the direction of Père Roland de Vaux of the Dominican Ecole Biblique in Jordanian-controlled East Jerusalem. (Until 1967, it must be remembered, the Qumran region was in Jordanian

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hands.) In one cave alone, Cave 4, 800 scrolls and fragments were discovered. At the same time, the Bedouins, now realizing there were objects in these honeycombed cliffs with a high market value, searched the caves surreptitiously, removing scrolls and scraps of writing, much of which made its circuitous way to the scholars, but some of which may conceivably still be sitting in the safes of antiquity dealers anywhere in the Middle East, waiting for the moment when the price is right.

Most of the scrolls, then, were deposited in the Rockefeller Museum in East Jerusalem, essentially under de Vaux's authority. Beginning in 1953, an international team of just seven scholars was assembled to decipher, edit, and publish the scrolls. Most of them were Catholic and there were no Jews. Given the political divisions of the time, it would have been unthinkable to invite Israeli participation, and in any case, Père de Vaux, a member of the fascist Action Française during his youth in France, was both anti-Zionist and frankly anti-Semitic. As a result of the conquest of East Jerusalem in June 1967, the Rockefeller Museum came under the jurisdiction of the Israel Antiquities Department. But its director, Avraham Biram, was loath to interfere with the arrangements made by the existing team of researchers, perhaps fearing a public uproar or diplomatic incident. He insisted only on a necessary modification of nomenclature—that the words "of Jordan" be stricken from the title of the publication series, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan*. Meanwhile, the pace of publication was slowing from respectable to scandalous: the fifth volume of the scrolls appeared in 1968; a sixth volume did not see the light of day until 1977. I shall return to the issue of delay, which has been at the center of the current controversy.

In 1985, John Strugnell of Harvard, a British-born convert to Catholicism and a member of the team since the 1950's, was appointed head of the international editorial committee, succeeding Père Benoit of the Ecole Biblique who had taken over after Père de Vaux. This appointment set the fuse for the recent explosion. Strugnell, according to the testimony of those who have worked with him, is a brilliant and engaging, or at least amusing, person. He brought onto the team its first Jewish member, Emanuel Tov of the Hebrew University, who had been his student at Harvard, and he also has consulted closely with the talmudist Ezra Sussman on technical issues of Jewish law raised by one of the scrolls. But Strugnell is also an anti-Zionist and a doctrinal if not emotional anti-Semite, and in recent years he has had serious problems with alcoholism and emotional instability. All this surfaced spectacularly in the fall of 1990 in an interview Strugnell gave in one of his weaker moments to the Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz*, in which he openly declared his contempt for Judaism as a religion and his belief that the Jews should put an end to their collective existence by converting to the true faith.

In the ensuing scandal, Strugnell, who needed hospitalization for psychiatric care, was forced to resign his post by Amir Drori, the man who had taken over the Israel Antiquities Department in 1988 and transformed it into the Antiquities Authority, an entity with more far-reaching powers. Emanuel Tov was appointed as the new editor-in-chief of the scrolls project. Some deference was still given to the international committee, which designated Père Emile Puech of the Ecole Biblique and Eugene Ulrich of Notre Dame as co-editors, but it was clear that the Israelis were now calling the shots. Drori, moreover, an archeologist, a retired general, and a decided activist as an administrator, had taken another step toward assumption of responsibility two years earlier by appointing a three-man Israeli scrolls advisory committee consisting of Magen Broshi, curator of the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum where the seven original scrolls are housed, and Jonas Greenfield and Shemaryahu Talmon, both eminent Hebrew University authorities on the scrolls and on Hebrew and Aramaic philology. Broshi held some 40 half-day meetings with his advisory committee during its first two years of operation. He also insisted that each scholar assigned to editing a scroll be given an unambiguous deadline, with 1997 set as the date for submission of all materials and 2000 as the date for the completion of publication. These energetic steps have by and large been ignored in the recent outcry over the withholding of the scrolls.

The leather-lunged cheerleader of the outcry is Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, a stylish mass-circulation bimonthly that publishes excellent short articles by leading scholars accompanied by sumptuous photographs. Shanks had begun in the mid-80's to issue a series of clarion calls for the rapid publication of the rest of the scrolls and the immediate granting to all scholars of access to the texts. Understandably, when the Strugnell scandal broke a year ago, Shanks was quick to turn a spotlight in his magazine on the latest shame of the scrolls committee. Anti-Semitism apart, the image of a disheveled Strugnell in his cubicle in the Ecole Biblique filing vital documents for the scrolls project in empty beer cartons did not inspire confidence in the custodial scruples of the team he directed, and he himself over the years had published precious little of the material with which he had been entrusted. The Israeli authorities meanwhile insisted that the project was now proceeding with all deliberate haste. This contention by no means satisfied Shanks, who sponsored a maneuver that decisively pushed the long-guarded scrolls into the public domain.

In early September 1991, Shanks announced

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that the Biblical Archaeology Society, which he chairs and which is the publisher of his magazine, was about to issue the first of a series of volumes called *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls*. The text had been prepared by Ben-Zion Wacholder, a professor of Talmud at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, working together with Martin G. Abegg, Jr., a graduate student and computer specialist, and it is a peculiar artifact of the age of high technology. In 1960, a privately circulated concordance had been prepared of the unpublished Qumran texts; a few years ago it was printed in a very small edition. Using the concordance, which cites not merely single words but the complete clauses in which they appear, Wacholder and Abegg were able with the aid of a computer to generate whole texts. "Whole texts," however, is something of an exaggeration, since the one volume (Hebrew only) that has appeared is made up entirely of fragments, most of them fewer than ten lines, and often defective lines at that. The exclusive subject of the fragments is a system of rotation of priestly celebrants, hardly a topic that will revolutionize our understanding of Jewish visions of reality around the time of Jesus.

In any case, the Shanks-Wacholder-Abegg publication elicited cries of piracy and theft from a number of established scrolls scholars. One undeniable criticism was that this was a shaky if not shady way to establish a text, and that even if the computer extrapolations were dependable, the 1960 concordance in many respects was not. But the barn door had been kicked open, and everything that had been locked inside rapidly galloped out.

Within a few weeks, the Huntington Library of San Marino, California announced that it would make available for the use of all scholars the complete set of photographs of the scrolls which it had in its possession. (The photographs had been made in 1980 as a safeguard against destruction of the texts in war or other disaster.) The Israeli authorities at first grumbled and issued vague threats of taking legal action; but, accepting the inevitable, Emanuel Tov announced on October 27, 1991 that duplicate sets of the photographs—at the Rockefeller Museum, Oxford University, the Hebrew Union College, and the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center at Claremont College—would be available for the free use of scholars, with permission to quote limited portions of the scrolls but "for personal research only and not for the production of a text edition." Hershel Shanks called this "a subterfuge for controlling access." Three weeks later, on November 20, his moment of triumph came. Two scholars, Robert H. Eisenman of California State University at Long Beach (more about him presently) and James M. Robinson of Claremont College, announced that a lawyer representing an anonymous benefactor had presented them with a set of 1,787 photographs of all the scrolls. These had been taken some years earlier by an Arab photographer, Najib Albina—how, it is not clear, but evidently not through the good offices of the international scrolls committee. The attorney of the anonymous benefactor, however, assured everyone that no legal prerogatives had been violated. Shanks's Biblical Archaeology Society announced it was preparing to issue a two-volume facsimile edition of all the scrolls for $195, well within the research allowance of even the most modest scholar. The Dead Sea Scrolls were now fully public.

THIS twisted chain of events spanning 44 years, with its clandestine transfers of texts and photos, its shadowy benefactors and anonymous advertisements, its mixture of painstaking scholarship and flamboyant alcoholism, looks like a cross between the Marx Brothers and John Le Carré. Observers overly fond of spy stories and inattentive to the elements of inadvertent farce in the Qumran capers have been receptive to conspiracy theories to explain the withholding of the scrolls. (It is, by the way, not even clear how much has been "withheld": Israeli authorities claim as much as 80 percent of the materials has already been published; some critics put the figure at only 25 percent. Percentages are likely to be misleading because much of what remains consists of tiny fragments, not in any sense "books," and some of these duplicate one another.) Edmund Wilson, in his still beautifully readable and on the whole balanced popular account of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1957, revised edition 1969), was one of many who set the stage for conspiracy theories by suggesting that the Qumran material might be threatening to Judaism by undermining the authority of the Masoretic text of the Bible—in fact, hardly a major vested interest of non-fundamentalist Jewish scholarship—and to Christianity by compromising the uniqueness of Jesus and his messianic role. By now, however, most scholars have concluded that the doctrines of the Qumran sectarians have only an indirect and by no means causal connection with the rise of Christianity, though Robert Eisenman is a notable exception in this regard.

Two young journalists, Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, unfortunately have swallowed Eisenman's theories whole, virtually becoming his publicists, in their new book, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*.* Their account reflects that vision of the sinister machinations of Rome which has repeatedly flourished in English-speaking countries ever since the Reformation. Although they are right that the scrolls have been for the most part in Catholic hands and that several of the editors have also been outspoken anti-Semites, they make the highly implausible claim that Vat-

* Summit, 268 pp., $20.00.

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ican authorities have secretly controlled the whole project, suppressing essential scroll material because it would have an "explosive" effect on Christian faith. Even so vehement a critic of the scrolls committee as Hershel Shanks has aptly noted in a review of Baigent and Leigh (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, November-December 1991) that the many Catholic scholars involved in Qumran work, including one at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, betray no evidence of this alleged bias, and that several of them have actually been vocal in demanding the prompt release of the unpublished texts.

The sheer withholding of documents unfortunately encourages fantasies that they contain portentous information. At the far end of this continuum of response shared by Baigent and Leigh, sensational weekly tabloids like the *Sun* and the Canadian *Weekly World News* have been announcing that the unpublished scrolls will reveal: proof of life after death, a miracle cure for AIDS and cancer, the date of the end of the world, the invasion of earth by extraterrestrials in the biblical era, and, what is sure to throw the Vatican iconographers for a loop, the physical appearance of God. ("Though the description is sketchy, the scrolls say He has fiery green eyes, flowing brown hair, and stands 9 feet tall," we are told by Kathryn LaRocque of the *Weekly World News*, who appears to have devoted too many television hours to watching the Incredible Hulk.) Even the sober editorialist of the New York *Times*, in applauding the publication of the Wacholder-Abegg volume, piously intones that we as a civilization must have all the scrolls for "what they say about the common roots of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism." In fact, what the scrolls tell us about either Christianity or rabbinic Judaism is more marginal than many have imagined, and it is unlikely that world-shaking revelations will emerge from the texts yet to be published.

THE snail's pace of publication after the early 1960's has certainly been disgraceful, even granting the immense difficulties of piecing together thousands of tiny fragments and reconstructing defective texts. But this slowness is almost entirely attributable to the institutional vices of academic life, of which laymen may have no adequate notion, and not to a secret plot. The original seven scholars were given assignments to prepare critical editions of specific texts. As is the common academic practice with manuscript materials, they regarded these materials as their private scholarly property until the actual publication. Working with that academic inner calendar which measures time not in months or years but in sabbaticals and jubilees, many of them lingered for decades over their texts. Scrolls were parceled out to their graduate students as dissertation topics—academic work is, after all, a form of intellectual entrepreneurialism—while established scholars not associated with the team were often refused access. An original editor with one of the largest hoards of texts, the Paris-based J. T. Milik, does not even answer his mail.

The claim of members of the scrolls committee that time is needed in order to prepare "definitive" editions of the texts is unconvincing. Of course, no one wants to encourage harum-scarum scholarship, and one can anticipate that with total access even more foolish things will be written about the scrolls than have been written in the past. But everywhere in humanistic scholarship, even for far more recent and intelligible texts, the idea of the definitive edition has proved a will-o'-the-wisp: one generation's reconstruction generally requires redoing a couple of generations later. The Israeli authorities were surely remiss in failing to intervene during their first 21 years of jurisdiction over the scrolls. In the last three years they have begun at last to force oil into the frozen gears of the project, and the new chain of sensational developments, whatever the exaggerations it has encouraged, has had the salutary effect of jolting the project into the forward motion it should have achieved decades ago.

BUT what, after all, is the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls? Above all, they provide ancient testimony to the life of a crucial period in Western cultural history about which our knowledge is full of yawning gaps bridged by shaky conjecture. In the early years after the discovery, there were a few dissenting scholars who argued that the texts were late, or forged; but there is now virtual unanimity about their antiquity, based on paleographic and linguistic analysis, carbon-14 dating, and minute attention to the veiled historical references of the documents. The oldest manuscripts may go back as far as the late 3rd century B.C.E (and this, of course, does not preclude the possibility that a few of the texts are copies of still older compositions). The religious commune—*yaḥad*—at Qumran was probably established around the middle of the 2nd century B.C.E. and continued until 68 C.E., the time of the arrival of the armies of Vespasian and Titus in the Dead Sea region. Though some texts may have originated close to this later date, the compositions that most directly reflect the life of the sect (*The Manual of Discipline, The Damascus Covenant, The War Scroll, The Thanksgiving Hymns*) were in all likelihood written between the beginning and the middle of the last pre-Christian century. The probability of this early dating argues strongly against the sundry sensationalistic proposals that the literature of the sect refers to Jesus, to his brother James the Just, or to Paul.

Three categories of materials have been unearthed at Qumran, all of keen interest to specialists in the period, but only one of which is likely to engage the attention of the layman. At least portions of all the books of the Hebrew Bible have

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been found, except for Esther, with a complete Isaiah among the first seven scrolls. Several books of the Apocrypha were also discovered in the Qumran library. Finally, there is a variety of hitherto unknown compositions, many, but perhaps not all, reflecting the ritual and communal life and doctrines of the sectarians.

The biblical manuscripts are obviously of first importance in understanding the history of the biblical text. In many instances they represent manuscript traditions that diverge from that of the Masoretic text, though one cannot assume that the versions of the sectarian scribes are automatically and invariably more authoritative than those that were later consolidated in the Masoretic text. The books of the Apocrypha are precious finds because they provide Hebrew and Aramaic originals of works previously known only through Greek, Latin, and other translations. They also offer some indication of what were the extra-canonical texts in circulation at the time, at least among Jewish readers of this particular religious bent.

It is, however, to the third category of material, original compositions, that the general public looks for revelations. Their nature and provenance are still a scholarly battleground, though there is a consensus view, which I will try to summarize, not presuming to rush in with an independent judgment where specialists fear to tread.

From the contemporaneous account of the historian Josephus, it is conventional to divide Palestinian Jewry around the turn of the Christian era into three important religious trends: the Pharisees, essentially the founders of the revolutionary movement in law and theology that became rabbinic Judaism; the Sadducees, the priestly and aristocratic party who were strict constructionists on biblical doctrine; and the Essenes, a group that, according to Josephus (who claims to have been briefly a member of the sect), was ascetic, pietistic, and separatist. Given the Essenes' sectarian practices and the indications in several ancient sources that they had a commune in the Dead Sea area, most scholars from the beginning have been prepared to identify the Qumran group with the Essenes. This view still seems the most plausible one, though of late, as I shall explain, it has been refined and complicated.

Challenges to the consensus are vehement but unconvincing. Robert Eisenman imagines that several of these texts are the polemical work of the first generation of Jewish Christians, followers of Jesus who still insisted on the punctilious observance of Jewish law. In Eisenman's reading of the *Habbakuk Pesher* and other scrolls, a figure called the Righteous Teacher of the Qumranites is James the Just, while one called the Preacher of Lies is Paul, who abrogated Jewish law. Apart from the improbably late dating of the texts required by this piece of cryptography, it is based on some dubious philological claims. To cite one crucial instance, the designation Preacher of Lies, *matif hakazav*, is translated "Pourer Out of Lying" and is said to evince "baptismal imagery." It is true that the etymological root of *matif* is a verb meaning "to drip" (not "to pour"), but the term is already firmly lexicalized in the Bible in the sense of preacher, making Eisenman's contention extremely far-fetched.

In a less fanciful vein, the University of Chicago scholar, Norman Golb, has recently argued (*American Scholar*, Spring 1989) that the Dead Sea Scrolls were not written at the Dead Sea and are not sectarian productions. He points to various pieces of evidence that contradict the consensus view. The ruins at Qumran show the presence of a military garrison, though the Essenes were supposed to have been pacifists. Women were buried there, though the commune was supposed to have been celibate. His contention is that refugees from the Roman onslaught against Jerusalem brought with them a collection of texts that covered the whole spectrum of literary productivity of 1st-century Jewry. While Golb is surely right in saying there is no reason to assume that every Qumran text was actually composed at Qumran, there are two lines of special pleading in his argument. He must insist on striking ideological disparities among texts where the continuities of outlook and sensibility, whatever the incidental discrepancies, are impressive. Second, from the absence of any Pharisean or early Christian documents in this supposedly eclectic collection of Jewish texts he is compelled to conclude that rabbinic Judaism and Christianity "did not yet exist as movements," which is surely allowing an initial premise to dictate a conclusion in the face of evidence that argues against it.

There will no doubt be still other theories, for the archeological evidence, like that of the manuscripts, is ambiguous. Roland de Vaux was sure he had uncovered the remains of a "monastery" with a scriptorium, a conclusion questioned by Golb and also by a pair of Belgian archeologists who have reexamined de Vaux's work and think that the structure at Qumran may have been a luxurious "winter villa" to which members of the Sadducean aristocracy repaired. Whatever the actual nature of the building above the caves, and whether or not the character of its use may have been changed radically in 68 C.E., there appears to be a more complicated if less dramatic link betwen the Dead Sea denizens and the Sadducees. This is a view persuasively argued by Yakov Sussman in an important new article in the Hebrew quarterly *Tarbits* (no. 59, 1990).

Sussman finds that where principles of *halakhah*, Jewish law, emerge in the scrolls, they stand consistently in opposition to the *halakhah* of the Pharisees and in consonance with the rulings represented as "Sadducean" by the heirs of the Pharisees in the Talmud. Sussman proposes that the Essenes were a breakaway group originating

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among the Sadducees. They vehemently objected, he suggests, to the aristocratic worldliness of the Sadducean priesthood while they clung to the strict constructionism of the Sadducees' approach to biblical law and thus fiercely opposed the relative flexibility and the popular character of the Pharisees' new legal system. Later talmudic tradition amalgamated the Sadducees and the separatist Essenes into a single Sadducean *halakhah*, which it roundly rejected.

This image of the Qumran sectarians intransigently fighting their fellow Jews on two different fronts at once certainly accords with the quality of spiritual ferocity that marks most of the scrolls that have been published. However valuable these documents may be as evidence of the nature of Jewish sectarianism toward the end of the Second Temple period, the sectarians themselves are hardly the sort of ancestors whom either Jews or Christians would want to rush to claim, and in terms of the evolution of religion, they actually represent a dead end, not a nourishing source of either Judaism or Christianity. There were not very many of them—the number of graves suggests a limit of 200 at one time, as against a probable several thousand urban Essenes—and in their retreat to the Judean wilderness they were akin to those American sectarians who periodically follow some spiritual leader to an isolated spot in the mountains of Montana or Oregon to await the imminent end of the world.

Perched on the rim of history, looking out toward the End, the Qumran sectarians were scarcely equipped to engage moral life or the political realm with any nuance or complexity. Apocalyptic thunder drums through many of their texts. The world is divided uncompromisingly into the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. The former are few, indeed are limited to the sectarians themselves, and they alone will be spared the terrible divine wrath that is about to descend. Truth itself is conceived as an esoteric matter to be concealed from all but the elect: the master of the commune "shall conceal the teaching of the Law from men of falsehood, but shall impart true knowledge and righteous judgment to those who have chosen the way." The pre-apocalyptic moment in which the sectarians constantly live dictates a draconian code of morality and spiritual surveillance and a strictly hierarchical order that make rabbinic Judaism look almost libertarian and democratic by contrast. The Qumran texts are imbued with a brooding sense of sinfulness, a revulsion from the very carnality of human existence. Here, for example (in my translation), are three lines that appear with variations several times in *The Thanksgiving Hymns*:

> I am a creature of clay, compact of water,
> The secret of nakedness, the source of pollution,
> The crucible of iniquity and the fabric of sin.

Especially because the term for nakedness, *'ervah*, is the one that refers to forbidden sexual parts, and the word for pollution, *nidah*, alludes to menstruation, the lines project an almost Augustinian sense of disgust at coming into the world from the shameful hidden parts of a woman's body.

Much has been made of the literary character of the scrolls, without sufficient warrant. Yigael Yadin once claimed of *The Thanksgiving Hymns* that no one who did not read them in the Hebrew could conceive the poetic magnificence of these psalmotic compositions. As a student of biblical poetry, I would concur that it is exciting to have at our disposal several dozen new Hebrew poems in the biblical mode, but I must also say that in most respects this is derivative, epigonic verse. Here and there one encounters an arresting image or line, but for the most part the poems are pastiches of biblical poetry, repeatedly taking the urgency of the supplication psalms—Lord save me, my enemies encompass me—and coloring it with the crude emotional hues of apocalyptic *ressentiment*.

In general, there is a disquieting note in the relation of the sectarian writers to Hebrew textuality and the Bible. They were not, after all, building a new edifice on the foundation of the Bible like their adversaries the Pharisees, but rather sustaining through literary pastiche and apocalyptic fulmination the illusion that they were still living at the heart of the biblical destiny in all its Davidic and Aaronite glory, that they were continuing to write the Bible. Shemaryahu Talmon has drawn a trenchant distinction between the sectarians and the rabbis precisely in these terms in his recent *The World of Qumran from Within*:

> (Proto) rabbinic Jewry viewed the biblical era as a closed chapter and their own times as being profoundly different from that preceding age. In contradistinction, the Covenanters [at Qumran] perceived themselves as standing within the orbit of the biblical era and their community as the rejuvenated embodiment of biblical Israel: they were the "righteous remnant" whom God had spared when He delivered Judah and Jerusalem to the sword of the Babylonians. . . .

Such an orientation toward history through the reliving and extension of sacred texts encourages megalomaniacal self-importance and contempt for others as well as a kind of hallucinatory relation to present events. A particularly scary and symptomatic document of this mentality is *The War Scroll*. Although scraps and tatters of images drawn from Roman military practice float through the text, its choreography of confrontation between the forces of light and darkness is not really anchored in historical time. As Talmon has said of the sectarians in general, this is a piece of writing "suspended in limbo between the real

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and the visionary stage of history." The scroll's long list of "orders of battle," with its catalogues of trumpets and banners and weapons ornamented in silver and gold, is really a continuous act of incantatory word-magic. It is not through political action or social institution or legal initiative that this writer copes with the quandaries and terrors of life under the Roman empire but rather through the sheer exalting sonority of Hebrew words steeped in biblical memories. It is hardly surprising that nothing that would live on in history ever grew in this rocky ground overlooking—spiritually as well as literally—a slate-gray sea of salt.

A Wisdom poem discovered in Cave 4 offers a particularly instructive illustration of the relation of the Qumran literature to its biblical antecedents because it derives so explicitly from one biblical poem, Proverbs 7, with additional borrowings from a related poem in Proverbs 5. The text from Cave 4 has been dated paleographically to the 1st century B.C.E., though some scholars think the original composition may be older. It is quite possible that only a couple of centuries separate it from Proverbs 7, but a world of imaginative difference stands between the two poems. The biblical text is a warning cast in narrative form about the dangers of the seductress. The speaker is a worldly Mentor who addresses a vulnerable "lad." After an initial exhortation, he represents the seductress in the tricky twilight shadows waiting in the streets to pounce on her sexual prey:

She seizes him and kisses him,
impudently she speaks:
"I had to make peace-sacrifices,
today I fulfilled my vows.
So I came out to meet you,
to seek your presence, and I found you.
With coverlets I've spread my couch
dyed cloths of Egyptian linen.
I've sprinkled my bed
with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
Let's drink our fill of love till dawn,
let's revel in love's delights.
For the man is not at home,
he's gone on a far-off way.
The purse of silver he took in his hand,
at the full moon he'll come back home."
She draws him aside with all her talk,
with her smooth speech she lures him. . . .

The result, of course, is disastrous. "An arrow splits his liver"—evidently a reference to venereal disease—and the Mentor concludes in a formal exordium by warning all young men not to "stray on her paths.//For many are the victims she has felled,/numberless all she's killed.//Through her house are the ways to *Sheol*,/going down to the chambers of death" (my translation). This is, of course, not a very cheerful view of the pleasures of a one-night stand, but the poet has a keen eye for the alluring sensuous textures of seduction—all those imported luxury items, the bedclothes from Egypt and the fragrant spices from the East—and the seductress herself is a vivid figure, assuring the presumably hesitant young man that her husband is off on a business trip and won't be back for a couple of weeks, since the action, as an earlier line implies, takes place in the dark of the moon.

What does the poem found at Qumran make of this material? Just like the seductress of Proverbs 7 (in the sequence of lines leading up to the section I have quoted), the wicked woman of this text lingers about the city squares, her eyes glancing lasciviously. Here is how she is represented in the body of the poem:

She is ever prompt to oil her words,
and she flatters with irony,
deriding with iniquitous l[ips]. . . .
Her clothes are shades of twilight,
and her ornaments plagues of corruption.
Her couches are beds of corruption
and her [. . .] depths of the pit.
Her inns are couches of darkness,
and her dominions in the midst of the night. . . .
For her ways are ways of death,
and her paths are roads of sin,
and her tracks are pathways to iniquity,
and her byways are rebellious wrongdoings.
Her gates are gates of death. . . .
None of those who enter will ever return. . . .
[Translation by Geza Vermes]

My excerpting spares the reader some of the flood of sheer synonymity that gives the poem whatever momentum it has. Beginning on the purely verbal level, there is virtually no independent invention in this biblicizing poem: it is all strung together out of overlapping phrases taken from Proverbs, with an occasional locution from one of the Prophets. As literature, the poem is purely derivative. As an expression of the moral imagination, it reflects an even steeper decline from its model in Proverbs. For nothing can *happen* in the world of this poem. The witty narrative of Proverbs 7, like the enlivening persona of its Mentor, is entirely absent. The seductress is no longer a vivid human figure moving in a familiar medium of social institutions and material culture but an abstract emblem of hateful evil. She may even be, as Geza Vermes has suggested, an allegorical representation of false doctrine. In any case, she is evoked linguistically through that incantatory use of synonymity characteristic of many of the Qumran texts. If in Proverbs there is sometimes an intimation of imagistic association between "the pit" (*Sheol*) and the vaginal cavity of the seductress, in the Qumran text that link becomes an obsessive equation. Note in the lines quoted the repetitive insistence on corruption in whatever touches the body of the

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seductress—her ornaments and her bed—and in the following two lines, the sense of some radical awfulness lurking beneath the woman's skirts: "Her legs go down to work wickedness,/and to walk in wrongdoings.//Her [. . .] are foundations of darkness,/and a multitude of sins in her skirts." The seductress of Proverbs has been recast in the darkly brooding tones of "the secret of nakedness, the source of pollution" that we encounter in *The Thanksgiving Hymns.*

THERE is no question that a good deal more is now known about a pivotal moment in Jewish history through the Dead Sea Scrolls. We have even learned instructive things about the evolution of the Hebrew language, its orthography, and the way it may have been pronounced around the turn of the Christian era. But the popular fascination with the scrolls that has been sustained for over four decades and the inordinate hopes for a grand revelation from these scraps of parchment betoken one of the great modern illusions—that if only we could take within our grasp the material substance of the past, if only we could empty out all the contents of its buried time capsules, we might touch an ultimate secret of origins, understand in a new and illuminating way how we came to be what we are. Whatever the wealth of historical testimony discovered in the Qumran texts, and perhaps still to be discovered, we will almost certainly not find in them any such truth of origins. By the time the sectarians fled their Dead Sea dwelling in 68 C.E., the early Christians (chiefly Paul) and the early rabbis had already taken decisive steps toward creating supple new systems of belief and religious practice out of the texts and ideas of the Hebrew Bible—on the one hand, a bold synthesis of monotheism with the mythic power of the mystery cults and a translation of theological universalism into a universalism of religious constituency; on the other hand, a refashioning of biblical doctrine as an intricate and developing system of law, based on learning, and, at least in principle, accessible to all Jews.

Against these achievements, whose power is still palpably projected from that turbulent era to ours, the writings of the Qumran sectarians seem narrow and rigid and shrill. They withdrew from the teeming city to a rock-strewn desert, hearkening to the voice of their master and awaiting the destruction of their enemies. The air they breathed was an atmosphere of hypnotic words that insulated them from the changing winds of history. The texts they left behind will continue to be intriguing objects of scrutiny but can offer scant sustenance for us who live in the unfolding movement of historical time.

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The Illegibility of This World

A Story

Richard Stern

THIS weekend, between the World Series and Halloween, I'm alone. Ellen's in Buffalo for our daughter Annie's thirty-sixth birthday. Friday, I drove her to Midway, then went downtown to my one-room office on Adams, checked the markets, bought a Kansas City municipal, faxed a letter to our insurance agent, sent copies of our living wills to our granddaughter—old enough now to be in on it; who knows, she might be the one to unplug the tubes—and walked five blocks to the Pub Club for the best hour of the day, lunch at the Round Table on the eleventh floor looking over the silver river and the blue bulge of the State of Illinois Building.

I've been a club member 35 years. It's more important than ever now that I've retired. I used to ridicule my Uncle Bert's New York life, a shuttle between the City Athletic Club and his rooms at the Hotel Warwick across the street. I thought that 25-yard shuttle the icon of his narrowness and ignorance. Now my Chicago life resembles his—I arrive early enough—11:45—to ensure a seat at the Round Table. (It's gauche to turn up earlier, but if you come as late as 11:50, the table's full and you take your chances with less congenial company.) The table doesn't have the best view, but I've had enough scenic views in my life. I hunger for the day's stories, for jokes, for the latest aches, grandkids, market tips, slants on the news.

We usually start with stories in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Trib*, and the New York *Times*. Mike Royko's column gets a big play from us. International, national, local news, the latest this or that. We've got fellows who follow science, books, and arts—we're all readers and TV watchers. Mondays we go over the Bears' game. We cover restaurants, travel—we're a worldly bunch. We know each other's form sheet, we have roles: I'm the left-winger; three or four of us are political Neanderthals basically unhappy that Gorbachev changed the old game. Two regulars have been Assistant Secretaries (one of State, one of Commerce) and one of us was on Reagan's Economic Council; we feel we're privy to inside dope. Anecdotes about politics in Washington and Chicago are one of our stocks-in-trade.

The talk I prefer is personal. Friday, we talked about fathers: time has cleared mine of wrong, translating his naiveté into honesty, his timidity into modesty. I told how he read the morning *Times*, so lost in it he flicked cigarette ash into his coffee and drank it without blinking. No one laughed. I described his going down the elevator in his pajamas, forgetting his address in a taxi. I drew another blank: the Round Tablers know what's around our own corners. We've all had operations. Bill Trask's back curls with osteoporosis, Harlan Schneirman's lip from last year's stroke. Death bulletins are a regular, if unstressed, feature of our talk.

Of his father, Harry Binswanger says, "I shcarcely knew him." Though he's been in America more than 40 years, German phonemes pass in and out of his speech. Till he retired, he was my dentist, a good one, though Dr. Werner, my dentist since, says my mouth was in poor shape when I came to him. Harry—it used to be Heinz—is large, clumsy, thick-fingered. I felt secure with the heft of his fingers around my jaw, though they may have handicapped the delicacy of his bridge and canal work. I've heard something of his history for 25 years, but there's always more to know. Nor do I mind listening to what's familiar. (I'd have to leave the Round Table if I did.) Harry's parents divorced when he was eight. He visited his father in Mainz every Christmas. "Muzzer sent him my presents. He unwrapped zem, showed me vat they vere, zen mailed zem back."

Harry shook his head, a semaphore of passed anger. "He vass eggcentric, eggcitable, unshtable, couldn't make a living. Muzzer's fazzer said she deserfed vat she got, marrying 'a *hergelaufenen Juden*,' 'a Jew from God knows vere.' Fazzer had a farm near zuh Neckar Riffer. He bought turkeys; zey drowned; he bought marigolds—he luffed flow-

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ers; zuh riffer flooded zem; he bought pigs; zey broke out of zuh penss. Grandpa said, 'Not even pigs vill stay wiz him.' He became a portrait photographer, but vass no good wiz children. He vanted a picture uff me on zuh river, crying. I vouldn't sit on zuh raft. He tied me zere, slapped my face: 'Now cry.'

"He put his photographs in—vat-do-you-say?—a cabinet wiz a glass front. *Vitrine.* Tough kids—Nazi toughs—broke it. He said, 'It's time to get out.' He vanted to go to Brazil. He'd been born in Bukovina, the Romanians lost his papers. At zuh emigration office zey said, '*Für uns, bestehen Sie gar nicht.*' 'For us, you don't exist.' He vass shtuck. Somehow he made it srough zuh war. I saw him after, vonce. He lived in a basement room, zuh rest of zuh block was wrecked. Outside his vindow were a few inches of dirt wiz zree zinnias."

Driving back home, along the Lake by the Museum of Natural History, it struck me that Harry's in-and-out German accent was his mind's way of preserving that *hergelaufener* father of his, even as his stories turned him into comic relief.

ELLEN called at eight o'clock. "How're you doing?"

"Fine. I warmed up the chicken. Delicious. How's Annie?"

She was fine, so were Chuck and little Anne, the Buffalo weather was being its notorious self; the plane was an hour late. "Take care, dear," she said. "I'll see you Monday."

"You'd better."

Though it was nice to be alone, a hue of freedom I hadn't noticed that I hadn't noticed, at the same time, the house felt loose around me, slightly spooky.

In my leather armchair, I read a new book about an escaped prisoner and stopped at a German phrase I didn't really understand. (The second time today.) "*Die Unlesbarkeit dieser Welt.*" "The illegibility of this world." But the German pleased me, and I repeated the words till they felt at home on my tongue. Their author, a poet named Celan, was born—another coincidence—in Romania. His mother was killed in a death camp—the phrase suddenly made sense—and, decades later, he drowned himself in the Seine.

There's a quiver in my pleasant self-sufficiency; but I am comfortable, I am snug, taken care of. (Because I've taken care?) Who knows, maybe Harry's father, in his basement, looking out at his zinnias, felt the same; having survived what so few had might have been his comfort. Harry himself had been sent to Amsterdam, and, like Anne Frank, hidden. After the war, unlike Anne, he'd gone to a Dutch school. Had I forgotten, or never known, how he'd gotten to America, this man with whom I'd spent five or six hours a week for 25 years, whose hands had been in my mouth, to whom I'd paid thousands of dollars?

SATURDAY morning, I drove up to see my son, Peter. He'd moved again, the third time in five years. He gets bored with a neighborhood, seeks what he calls "action." A large, rangy boy—I shouldn't say boy, he's thirty-two—with lots of energy, he's chosen to be a salesman because he can't sit still. He sells polyvinyl traffic cones and is on the road three weeks a month. He doesn't much like the job, or any other he's had. The routines of money-making, the hierarchy of business authority, the cheerleading and critiques of salesmanship, the ups and downs of sales, go against his grain. And grain he has. As a boy, he was exceptionally gentle; in adolescence, he assumed a roughness which I felt contradicted his nature. He's still rough, argumentative, sarcastic, but now he mocks the roughness and regards it as a comic scurf he can remove at will. Deep down—whatever this means—is the gentle boy he was at five and six; very lovable.

A year after he graduated from the University of Illinois in Champaign, he married a girl he met in a singles bar; a year later they divorced. He asked his mother and me why we hadn't stopped him from marrying. "Couldn't you see it was a mistake?"

His mother said she'd suspected it, but what could she do? I said, "I liked Louise."

Ten years and many girls later, he's still unsettled. I ask him, "How long can you go on being Casanova?"

"Envious?"

"A little. Mostly worried. Not just about disease. This is a critical decade of your life. Squander it courting, you'll end up like the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, just where you are."

"What's wrong with that?"

"I don't mind, but I think you do."

His new apartment is on the first floor of a red-brick six-flat on one of the thousand tree-lined, quiet streets which root Chicago in a domestic independence which gets it through bad times better than the other industrial cities around the Lakes, Cleveland, Detroit, Erie.

The front door is open; he's been watching for me. I follow him into a bright room with an old couch, an armchair, a stack of pictures leaning against the wall, boxes of books and dishes. There's a stereo, no TV. "I don't want to get addicted." His addiction is bars, music, girls, cigarettes. There are four rooms, all in more or less the same tumbled shape, though the kitchen has a built-in orderliness. "Nice," I say. "It's light, the rooms are a good size, it's a pretty street. How much're you paying, may I ask?"

"Five hundred."

"I should move down here myself."

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"Too much action for you."

"Not that I can see. Except for the hurricane that hit your place."

"Come back in two weeks, it'll be immaculate. Ready to play?"

Now and then he consents to play tennis with me. I've been playing over half a century, and still get around pretty well. I know where the ball's coming and get it back. Peter has speed and power, and when he's playing well, doesn't give me any points, but I can frustrate him with tenacity and junk shots. Then he starts slamming balls out, or laughs so hard he misses them altogether. Now and then he gets angry—"*Hit* the goddamn ball"—but rarely, and I enjoy playing with him. Since I had a hernia operation a couple of years ago, the old sweetness of his boyhood comes through, and he's been easy on me. There's also some—I suppose classic—resentment. As we drive a few blocks to the public courts on Montrose, he tells me what a lucky life I've led. "You retired early, you've had a good marriage, you've got a granddaughter, and except for that hernia, you haven't been sick; you still play tennis, you liked your job, you've got some dough, you haven't been hassled—"

"The demographics were in my favor. No baby boom."

"Right. I'm one of too many."

"I wasn't much of a boomer."

"Two's more than enough."

There's some sibling resentment, though he and Annie are very good friends.

It's a bit chilly. I keep my windbreaker on, but play well, serve hard, and hit good backhands. I run Peter around the court, which he needs. He sets up the game so he has to chase around. Life cramps him. He spends too much time in cars, writing reports, closed up in his apartment, in bars. On vacations he goes to national parks where he climbs or paddles through white water. A few times he's gone to the Alps and the Pyrenees. But it's not enough for him.

Sometimes I feel that I stand in his way, a wordless—usually wordless—rebuke to his life. Then too I was off a lot on sales trips—neckwear, accessories—when he grew up; he missed me and I think he thinks I sacrificed him. The travel seemed more romantic to him than the chore it was. He thinks I've seen much more than I have, know much more than I do. I feel that he hardly knows me at all, which I don't mind. Should fathers and sons know each other? Or love each other? Well, I love him, though there are gaps of cold in all affection. Yet if the love isn't constant, it is recurrent. That should be enough for security, shouldn't it?

I win the set, 6-3. A rarity. We play another, and I don't win a game. I'm delighted. I always either try hard or appear to try hard, but it's been years since I've wanted to do better than Peter at anything. I want him to have what I've had and more. Above all, I want him to have—to want to have, and have—a child.

Back at his place, I clean up in the bathroom, he washes himself at the kitchen sink. He comes into the living room, the towel working over his wet body. I haven't seen him naked for years, and I'm a little shocked. He's very hairy, has a bit of a belly. This man, who as a boy looked like an angel, is into middle age. I look away. I don't want to see him this way. There's a book open on the beaten couch, I move it and sit down. "What's this?" I ask. He's got on his jockey shorts. His legs are enormous, they should be running up and down basketball courts or hills.

"Kafka," he says.

"Never really read him. Good stuff?"

"Not exactly." He's buttoning a blue shirt. "You ought to read that one."

"'Ought to'?"

"You'd understand me better."

"Maybe that's not a good idea. What's it about?"

"Read it. Take it home. But return it. I need it for my sessions."

"Your doctor's paid to understand you. All I have to do is love you."

He's put on blue jeans. "What's to love?"

"I'd better read it."

He's putting on white socks and sneakers. "How do you know it's me you love if you don't understand me?"

"That's too complicated. Do you have to understand *me* to love *me*?" As soon as I say this, I feel the discomfort of presumption. Maybe he doesn't love me. Love's too big a word anyway. It's used much too often. Morons in front of microphones hold out their arms to millions they have never met and cry, "I love you." All they mean is, "How wonderful to be shining up here." I never talked about love with my wife or children, my parents didn't with me, and I'm grateful. Love was assumed. A million feelings were bunched up in it.

I'm against all domestic analysis, I'm against understanding. That word also means too much. You understand a request, a situation, but how do you understand a person? You reduce him, that's how. Do I understand myself? Does Harry Binswanger understand his father? In a way, yes, because he hardly knew him. That is, he turned his father into a little vaudeville act, a comic handle which lets him carry the hot pan around. Why did he remember "For us you don't exist"? Because of his own fright that his father didn't exist for him, except as some snapshots of intim-

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idation and pathos. Not enough, he knows it's not enough. Peter and I have had thousands and thousands of moments with each other, many of them, maybe most of them, charged with something you can call love. But the word itself is just a convenience, a pigeonhole that can't really hold the complexity of it all.

His blue-shirted arms lie on the seamed, brown arms of the chair; he looks as big as Lincoln in the Memorial. He says, "I'm paying through the nose to find out if I'm capable of loving anyone."

That night, back in my armchair, I sat down with the book. Of course I'd heard about it often enough, but I'd never actually read it. And I had to force myself through it, though it's short, sixty or seventy pages, a story about a salesman, the support of his parents and sister, who wakes up one morning transformed into a huge bug. He can't go to work, they pound on his door, the chief clerk of the office comes to fetch him. (It's rather ridiculous.) Naturally he astounds, terrifies, and disgusts his parents and the young sister who for a while takes care of him, bringing him the rancid leftovers he prefers to fresh food. In time he annoys them so much, they want him to die; when he does, they're released and happy.

Now what in God's name makes Peter think that this story has anything to do with him? In the kitchen, I open a bottle of red wine, pour a third of it into a water glass, clip and light a cigar, and go back to my chair to think it out.

In the first place, Peter's never supported us. *Au contraire.* In the last three years he's made a point of not taking money from me at Christmas and his birthday, but he knows I'm there, ready to help him. "I helped your sister when she and Chuck bought the house, and I want to help you when you're ready to buy." I wouldn't dream of his sharing, let alone, taking, a check in a restaurant. All right, then, what's the similarity? Does he feel like a bug? Have his mother and I made him feel like a bug? Does he disgust us? Do we want him dead? Absurd. I sit puffing, sipping. Beyond this lamplit circle, it's dark. Here, it's warm, comfortable, charged with the pleasure of the wine, the special, bittersweet fullness of the smoke; yet my heart's hammering away. Clearly, Peter feels that he's inadequate, repulsive. What's askew in this boy of mine?

Or is he putting it on, dramatizing himself, using the author's own self-dramatics as his crutch? (But Kafka invented these things, and, I think, thought they were funny. There is something funny about it.)

I went to the desk and wrote a note:

Dear Peter,

Your're no bug, and I hope I'm not a bit like that pompous, cringing, bullying, self-righteous father. I don't see this story as a key to you. Maybe you can explain it to me. You can do it over the best lunch in Chicago, or in one of your bars. You choose.

Love—if that's still a permissible word—Dad

I'm on my way upstairs to draw a bath when I wonder what the word actually means. *Metamorphosis.* I go down again, lift out the heavy—eight pounds, I once weighed it on the bathroom scale—first volume of the compact edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, for which we joined the Book-of-the-Month-Club about 20 years ago. I polish the big magnifying glass on my pants and read. *Change of form,* from the Greek.

Upstairs, as I unbutton my shirt, I feel restless. I need a walk. I button up, put on a sweater, exchange my moccasins for the springy walking shoes Annie gave me last Christmas, and, downstairs, put on the black leather jacket young people on the street or in stores look at in surprised approval. (Sometimes they say something like "Nice.") I pat my pocket to make sure the key's there—I don't want to be stuck outside with Ellen in Buffalo, and I hope she doesn't call when I'm out, getting the answering machine and worrying that I'm looped around a lamppost on the Outer Drive.

The relief of the air, the dark. There's moonlight after the early evening shower, the oak tree on the lawn had shed its last leaves, they're thick on the lawn, a sea of shapes. The branches are transformed by bareness, a pre-death bareness. Lucky, in a great city, to live on a street that registers the seasons so clearly.

The cold air feels so wonderful. The small lights of the small houses, the interrogative iron curl of the lampposts, the pools of moonlight on the metal skin of the cars; beautiful. I don't want to leave this. After my operation, I was so fatigued I didn't care about living or dying. Only the idea of leaving Ellen kept me going. Now I understand what I'd laughed at in the obit column this week, the eighty-nine-year-old mogul, William Paley, asking people why he had to die. I know life usually wears you down and you're ready to go. Not with him. Not with me.

A *Trib* piece said Paley was a rat, sold out everyone who loved or helped him, took credit for everything; in short, a perfect dead horse for newspaper whips. Is egomania what keeps you alive? Maybe for tycoons. I don't need an empire. Leaves are enough, the moon, the air.

I walk through the bank parking lot, then left on Dorchester. The maples are half-full of pumpkin-colored leaves. (Are the ones still there the Paleys?) Pumpkins are lit on porches. The confidence in these houses. Chairs, lamps, bookshelves, the purple flare of TV's.

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I'm the only one on the street. No, up ahead, someone's coming. Should I turn? No. Courage. A black man in a raincoat, eyeglassed; a fellow burgher. We should say "Good evening," the way they do in small towns, but we don't. We just pass each other, relieved. I round the brick six-flat on the corner. Back on my block. A couple I know stands on their porch, white man, black woman. I don't know their names. I wave, she waves.

My block.

IN THE bath, my body looks heavy, fattish knees big, dingus floating in soapy foam. God, man is ugly. No wonder people write about metamorphosis. My body. Peter's. My body forming his, my mind—whatever that is—his. Chromosomes, genes, strings of sugar and protein generating versions of themselves which somehow become others. There's some of Uncle Bert in me. Is it why I live as he did? Transmission. This floating dingus rose to Ellen's innards and generated Annie, and later Peter. Annie's Anne has my stuff in her, and when she signals doctors to turn off my life, she shuts off her own spigot. Thought. Ghosts. Spooks. The world, so clear and snug, isn't. Metamorphosis. A rational man turns verminous. A rational country declares some citizens verminous and kills them.

I soap arms, armpits, the side where my scar begins, the left leg, the right, the crack, the ankles, the toes. Lovely. The mind lolls. What is a thought? Form without bulk. "For us, you don't exist." How could he not exist? He was there. But existence meant a paper, a name, a class. Citizen, father, uncle, niece, son, President. Tuesday's Election Day. Men and women run *to be*, to be entitled. I'll push a stylus through numbers on a card to make a governor, a senator. (Later, they could make or unmake me.) The father in *Metamorphosis* becomes a bank messenger, has a uniform with brass buttons, and, like the doorman in the old film *The Last Laugh*, swells with pride. Fired, uniform taken away, the doorman shriveled away.

If I died here in the tub, Ellen would be a widow. She wouldn't know it till she came home. Knowing changes things. That's why you have to remember, especially those who did nothing memorable, had no children, planted no trees, wrote no books, carved no stones, left nothing but lines in old telephone directories, on stones in suburban cemeteries. Where is Bert buried?

WHAT'S the sense of remembering the unmemorable? Can't be helped, it's involuntary. Why hasn't evolution weeded it out? What does it have to do with survival? On our bedroom calendar, the November quotation (in blue letters beside the ironic, ethereal face of Albert Einstein) is: "What I value in life is quality rather than quantity, just as in Nature the overall principles represent a higher reality than does the single object." But isn't quality in the single object? What's worth more, the singular jerk, or the genetic dictionary which formed him?

"Don't foul your own nest." Uncle Bert.

That was what he told me 40-odd years ago back in New York. My parents and sister had taken off for a month, to Banff, Lake Louise, the Rockies, California. I was left in our apartment alone, very happy. I worked in the Paramount Films Sales Trainee Program on 43rd and Broadway. Weekends I went up with my cousin Andy—who had a car—to Quakerridge, my sister's club. I played tennis, swam, ate hamburgers, and signed her name to the chits. One Saturday I saw Lynette Cloudaway lying by the pool. Two months before there'd been a feature spread about her in *Life*, an Arkansas girl who'd come to New York to be an actress. A photographer followed her around snapping pictures, at work, shopping, taking a bath, kissing her boyfriend goodnight. I'd fallen for her in *Life*, and here she was, in the flesh, by the pool. I could hardly speak. "May I sit here?"

"Sure." The smile I recognized, the throaty voice was new, devastating.

"I recognize you."

"It's me."

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm with Will." The guy she kissed goodnight. "Not exactly 'with,' he's playing golf."

"Good. You can marry me."

"What name will I have?"

"Mrs. Larry Biel."

"Set the date."

We talked schools, jobs, where we lived, siblings, boy- and girlfriends, movies, books, songs, the works. How confident Will must be to leave this perfection by herself; he didn't deserve her.

"Leave him."

"I haven't had my swim yet."

From the diving board, she jumped into the water. I paddled after her, dodging kids and dowagers. Beyond the flagstones, cigar-smokers played bridge. On umbrellaed lounges, bodies toasted. Lawns, blue sky, the rich, Lynette, a Jewish Fitzgerald scene (the madness and cruelty evaporated).

Andy showed up. "Time to go."

To Lynette: "I better not miss my ride."

"You coming to the dance next week?"

"I will now. If I have to walk."

But I talked Andy into driving up again, white jacket and all.

Bare-shouldered, breasts under lace, Lynette was in another gear of beauty. On the dance floor, I kissed her ear, her cheek, her mouth.

"We shouldn't do that."

"Why not?"

"I like it. And Will would see."

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"Let him," I mouthed. Tough guy, who'd melt at a leer.

"Let's not dance for a half hour or so."

"If you think so." Snootily. But before she went back to Will I got her phone number.

Monday I called her office from mine. "Lunch?"

"Tomorrow."

We met at Toffenetti's, the glittery restaurant a block from the Paramount. I brought her the Viking Portable Fitzgerald, told her to read *Tender Is the Night*, and asked her to go out with me Saturday.

"I spend weekends with Will."

THURSDAY night she called me at home where I was working off my passion for her by myself. "Will's going fishing in the Adirondacks. I've got to get my shoes fixed on 82nd and Amsterdam. I could come by your place after if you like."

Would I like. I bought the first bottle of wine in my life, got whitefish and rye bread from Barney Greengrass, stacked records on the phonograph, and by noon was lathered out of my mind. When the doorbell rang, I nearly fainted. Again, she looked different, playful, subtle. How many selves was she? I trembled too much to kiss her, could hardly talk. I managed to unscrew the bottle and trot out the sandwiches. We listened to Bing Crosby sing "Moonlight becomes you, it goes with your hair, you certainly know the right thing to wear." I had to go to the bathroom. The phone rang.

"Shall I get it?"

"Yes." Proud to show whoever called what I had going here.

"It's your Uncle Bert. He wants you to call him back. He sounded funny."

"He's a laugh a minute. What's he want?"

"He didn't say. Better call'm."

I did.

"Larry," he said, "Don't foul your own nest."

Old sap. *Foul.* Even then I felt its comic pathos. Yet also sensed the stupid debris of something brought down in stone. "She's my friend Al's wife," I said. "We're just going out."

"All right, but don't forget what I said."

The condom I'd gotten from the bathroom was ready, and I was getting there when the phone rang again. I didn't answer but thought, "The bastard'll probably come up here." It was nervousness talking. Despite my reading, despite six months' fornicating with my first girl between rows of boxwood near the stadium at Chapel Hill, I knew nothing. (Six years after Lynette, a week before Annie's birth, I still believed children were born through the—enlarged—navel.)

Don't foul your own nest. You fouled it for me, you old jerk. Wednesday, Lynette called my office. "I have something to show you." At lunch, she held out her left hand with the diamond ring.

I never saw her again. In person. Two years ago, *Life* published an anniversary issue, and there was Lynette as she'd been, mouth open gawking at a Broadway street scene on her way to work. Ravishing, perfect, the girl of my life. Under the 40-year-old photograph was one of a crinkled granny: Lynette today. I tried to see the young Lynette in the old face; couldn't, not a molecule. A caption said that she and Will lived in Seattle near their grandchildren. I thought of writing her. But why? I didn't want this grandmother. I wanted, *still* want, the girl who'd come to the apartment.

REMEMBERING acts on you, not you on it.

Why remember Bert? That sterile neatness, that concupiscent propriety? Immaculate in his blue suit, white silk handkerchief in the lapel pocket, gold tie and collar pins tucking him into himself, black silk socks taut in black garters, black shoes and hair gleaming with different fluids. So clean. His sister, my mother, another acolyte of cleanliness, was, in womanliness, beyond that. You wouldn't say she was immaculate. There was flow to her, dress over breasts and rear.

Arms hooked, she and Bert strolled on Fifth Avenue, mirrored paragons, proud to be with each other, going into Saks and Sulka's, Bert commandeering the service that was the chief source of his self-satisfaction. That and his Packard, his annuities, his neckties, his opinions, the blondes whose signed portraits—"To Bert with love, Jocelyn"—stood on his chifforobe.

I'm unfair. I'm repaying the resentment he felt for me as mother's baby. There was decency and generosity in him. I needed $5,000 to put down on a house—it would be $50,000 today—and he gave it to me. Every winter, he sent Ellen and me a crate of grapefruit and oranges from Boca Raton. Isn't he in that generous gold fruit as much as in the Sulka ties and antique injunctions? (The last crate of it arrived a week after he keeled over in a Florida pool.)

DRIVING downtown Tuesday, I recover from the small dislocation of Ellen's return. Spend so many years with a person, seeing her again after even a brief absence is like seeing her in closeup. Many unnoticed things are noticed, lines in the face, white in the hair, a rawness in the voice, dents and discolorations in the body. The least strange person in the world is, for an hour or two, a stranger. Perplexing, a little frightening.

Then the indispensability of the familiar returns, feelings of reliance, confidence, the identity and accepted disparity of views. There are habits of self-restraint as well as of self-expression. It's one package.

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I enjoy the grace and ease with which Ellen unpacks; her reports on the trip. At supper it's mostly about Annie, Chuck, and Anne. New problems, the resolution of old ones; the death of the big oak across the street; Chuck's worry about the recession—though a pharmacist should be almost recession-proof; the new Medicare regulations.

"Are things better with Bostorf?" I ask. This is Chuck's assistant, who Annie thinks is swindling him.

"He's still trouble. At least, Annie's worry about him is troublesome."

We've been worried about Chuck and Annie. They express their difficulties with each other obliquely; Bostorf is one of the targets of this indirection. "And Anne?" We worry a lot about the dangers to which so decent, open, and, we believe, innocent a girl can fall into in an American high school. For someone as much concerned as I am about the future of my seed, my fear about Anne's fall into womanhood—the antique phrase that comes to me—is puzzling.

I tell her about Peter, omitting *Metamorphosis.*

Some afternoons are hard. After the Round Table, I play cards, or billiards, or read magazines, then walk back to the office and check the market close. I get going at 3:30, before the rush hour, and am home by 4:15. We eat at 6:00 in front of the *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour,* then watch one of the scandal programs—people abusing, deceiving, molesting, kidnapping, killing: the human works. Then we read, watch programs, occasionally go out, or have friends in for bridge; then bath and bed. Beside Ellen's familiar warmth and fragrance, I go to sleep. Sometimes feelings bunch and we're active; afterward, we express gratitude to each other.

I don't sleep as I used to, and often go to the guest room to read till my eyes tire. I'm conscious of aches in the palms of my hands, my feet, my chest. Sometimes I read fear into these aches. After all, how much longer is there?

I've been a bystander, done nothing memorable. I've had no real trouble, have lasted six-and-a-half decades, raised—whatever that means—what will live after me, and live in my paid-up house with someone I love. I'm lucky. Still, now and then, it comes to me that I don't understand anything. As if the world's speaking a language I can't follow. Fear gets so loud, I can't sleep. Once in a while, I go back to our room and hold on to Ellen. Sometimes this helps—like finding a dictionary—but sometimes it doesn't.

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Harassment Blues

Naomi Munson

When I was graduated from college in the early '70s, I had the good fortune to land a job at a weekly newsmagazine. It was a wonderful place to work, financially lucrative, intellectually demanding but not overwhelming, and, above all, fun.

There was, actually, a sort of hierarchy of fun at the office. Ranking lowest were the hard-news departments; although (or perhaps because) they offered the excitement of late-breaking news and fast-developing stories, both the national- and the foreign-affairs sections were socially rather staid. Next up the scale came the business section, where the people were lively enough but where the general tone nevertheless reflected the serious nature of the subject matter. Then there was the culture department, a barrel of laughs in its own way, though the staff did seem to spend a certain amount of time at the opera. At the top of the scale stood the department where I wound up, which included science, sports, education, religion, and the like. Though there might be the occasional breaking news, these sections generally called more for long thought and thorough research, which led to a very laid-back atmosphere and a lot of down time. Drinking at nearby bars, dining at the finest restaurants, and dancing at local discos occupied a great deal of that time. And sex played a major role in all of this. (It did throughout the magazine, of course, but nowhere so openly and unselfconsciously as here.)

The men were a randy lot, dedicated philanderers, and foul-mouthed to boot; the women, having vociferously demanded—and been granted—absolutely equal status, were considered fair game (though there were a couple of secretaries whose advancing age and delicate sensibilities consigned them to the sidelines).

Imagine my surprise, then, when one day a young woman who worked with me flounced into my office, cheeks flushed, eyes flashing, to announce that she had just been subjected to sexual harassment. (It was a fairly new concept back then, at the end of the '70's, but being in the vanguard of social trends, we had heard of it.) When she explained that the offense had occurred not in our own neck of the woods but in the national-affairs section, I was truly shocked. When she identified the offender, however—sexually, one of the least lively types on the premises—I began to be skeptical. And when she described his crime—which was having said something to the effect that he longed for the good old days of miniskirts when a fellow had a real chance to see great legs like hers—I scoffed. "Oh, come on," I said. "That's not sexual harassment; that's just D. trying to pay you a compliment." To myself, after she had calmed down and left, I said, "She's even dimmer than I thought. She thinks *that's* what they mean by sexual harassment."

If I was convinced that this woman's experience did not constitute sexual harassment, I, like the vast majority of people at that time, had rather vague notions of what did. Whatever it was, however, it already seemed clear that the charge of sexual harassment would serve as a perfect instrument of revenge for disgruntled female employees. This was borne out by the story I came to know, years later, about a man at another office who had had several formal harassment charges brought against him by women who worked for him. The man was someone who would, as his coworkers saw it, "nail" anything that moved. He had, in fact, had longstanding affairs—which he had ended in order to move on to fresh conquests—with the women now accusing him of having offered financial inducements in exchange for sexual favors. The women claimed to have declined the offers and consequently suffered the loss of promotions.

Disgruntlement aside, however, it still seemed obvious to me that in a case of sexual harassment, something *sexual* might be supposed to have occurred. That quaint notion of mine was finally laid to rest during the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill debacle. Professor Hill's performance convinced me of nothing save that if she told me the sun was shining, I should head straight for my umbrella and galoshes. The vast outpouring of feminist outrage that accompanied the event did, however, succeed in opening my eyes to the sad fact that it was I, way back when, who had been the dim one; my erstwhile colleague had merely been a bit ahead of her time. For, it now turns out, what she described is precisely what they *do* mean by sexual harassment.

During the course of the hearing, story after story appeared in the media supporting the claim that men out there are abusive to their female employees. It was declared, over and over, that virtually every woman in the country had either suffered sexual harassment herself or knew someone who had (I myself, I realize, figure in that assessment). The abuse, it appeared, had been going on since time immemorial and was so painful to some of the women involved that they had repressed it for decades.

It became clear amid all the hand-wringing that we were not talking here about bosses exacting

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sexual favors in exchange for promotions, raises, or the like. Even Professor Hill never claimed that Judge Thomas promised to promote her if she succumbed to his charms, or that he threatened to fire her if she failed to do so. What she said, as all the world now knows, was that he pestered her for dates; that he boasted of his natural endowments and of his sexual prowess; that he used obscene language in her presence; that he regaled her with the details of porno flicks; and that he discussed the joys of, as Miss Hill so expressively put it, "(gulp) oral sex." The closest anyone at the hearing came to revealing anything like direct action was a Washington woman who was horrified when a member of Congress played footsie with her under the table at an official function, and a friend of Anita Hill who announced that she had been "touched in the workplace."

What we—or, to be more precise, they—were talking about was sexual innuendo, ogling, obscenity, unwelcome importuning, nude pin-ups; about an "unpleasant atmosphere in the workplace"; about male "insensitivity." One columnist offered behavioral guidelines to men who had been reduced to "whining" that they no longer knew what was appropriate—something to the effect that though it is OK to say, "Gee, I bet you make the best blackened redfish in town," it is not OK to say, "Wow, I bet you're really hot between the sheets." Even Judge Thomas himself declared that if he *had* said the things the good professor was accusing him of, it *would* have constituted sexual harassment.

Yet in response to all of this it also emerged very plainly that the American public just was not buying it. Single women were heard to worry that putting a lid on sex at the office might hurt their chances of finding a husband; one forthright woman was even quoted by a newspaper as saying that office sex was the spice of life. Rather more definitively, polls showed that most people, black and white, male and female, thought Judge Thomas should be confirmed, *even if the charges against him were true.*

How can it be that the majority of Americans were dismissing the significance of sexual harassment (as now defined) even as their elected representatives were declaring it just the most hideous, heinous, gosh-awful stuff they had ever heard of? How is it possible that, at the very moment newspapers and TV were proclaiming that American women were mad as hell and weren't going to take it anymore, most of these women themselves—and their husbands—were responding with a raised eyebrow and a small shrug of the shoulders?

For one thing, most Americans—unlike the ideologues who brought us sexual harassment in the first place, and who have worked a special magic on pundits and politicos for more than two decades now—have a keen understanding of life's realities. Having had no choice but to work, in order to feed and clothe and doctor and educate their children, they have always known that, while work has its rewards, financial and otherwise, "an unpleasant atmosphere in the workplace" is something they may well have to put up with. That, where women are concerned, the unpleasantness might take on sexual overtones gives it no more weight than the uncertainties, the frustrations, and the humiliations, petty and grand, encountered by men.

Most people, furthermore, have a healthy respect for the ability of women to hold their own in the battle of the sexes. They know that women have always managed to deal perfectly well with male lust: to evade it, to quash it, even to be flattered by it. The bepaunched and puffing boss, chasing his buxom secretary around the desk, is, after all, a figure of fun—because we realize that he will never catch her, and that even if he did, she would know very well how to put him in his place.

The women's movement and its fellow travelers, on the other hand, have never had any such understanding or any such respect. On the contrary, rage against life's imperfections, and a consequent revulsion against men, has been the bone and sinew of that movement.

The feminists came barreling into the workforce, some twenty years ago, not out of necessity, but with the loud assertion that here was to be found something called fulfillment. Men, they claimed, had denied them access to this fulfillment out of sheer power-hungry selfishness. Women, they insisted, were no different from men in their talents or their dispositions; any apparent differences had simply been manufactured, as a device to deprive mothers, wives, and sisters of the excitement and pleasure to which men had had exclusive title for so long, and which they had come to view as their sole privilege.

No sooner had these liberated ladies taken their rightful place alongside men at work, however, than it began to dawn on them that the experience was not quite living up to their expectations. They quickly discovered, for example, what their fathers, husbands, and brothers had always known: that talent is not always appreciated, that promotions are not so easy to come by, that often those most meritorious are inexplicably passed over in favor of others. But rather than recognizing this as a universal experience, they descried a "glass ceiling," especially constructed to keep them in their place, and they called for the hammers.

Feminists had insisted that childbearing held no more allure for them than it did for men. That insistence quickly began to crumble in the face of a passionate desire for babies. But rather than recognizing that life had presented them with a choice, they demanded special treatment. They reserved the right to take leave from their work each time the urge to procreate came upon them. And they insisted that husbands, employers, and even the government take equal responsibility with them for the care and upbringing of the little bundles of joy resulting from that urge.

And as for sex in the workplace, well, that was pretty much what it had always been everywhere: an ongoing battle involving, on the one side, attentions both unwelcome and welcome, propositions both unappealing and appealing, and

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compliments both unpleasing and pleasing, and on the other, evasive action, outright rejection, or happy capitulation. Having long ago decided that the terms of this age-old battle were unacceptable to them, the women of the movement might have been expected to try to eliminate them. With the invention of sexual harassment, they have met that expectation, and with a vengeance. Laws have been made, cases have been tried and, in the Clarence Thomas affair, a decent man was pilloried.

Having, in other words, finally been permitted to play with the big boys, these women have found the game not to their liking. But rather than retiring from the field, they have called for a continuous and open-ended reformation of the rules. Indeed, like children in a temper, who respond to maternal placating with a rise in fury, they have met every accommodating act of the men in their lives with a further escalation of demand. The new insistence that traditional male expressions of sexual interest be declared taboo, besides being the purest revelation of feminist rage, is the latest arc in that vicious cycle.

Nadine Gordimer's Politics

Jillian Becker

In Johannesburg, in 1949—the year I turned seventeen—my mother and three or four others launched a publishing company called Silver Leaf Books. It did not last long. It published only three books, two of which were soon forgotten. The third, *Face to Face*, was a volume of short stories by a young writer named Nadine Gordimer. The title did not become widely known, but the stories did. The collection was soon republished in New York under a new title: *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*.

Nadine Gordimer, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991, was born in the small town of Springs on the Witwatersrand, where her father, a Latvian-Jewish immigrant, had a jeweler's and watchmaker's business. When I first met her in Johannesburg in 1949 she was married to Gerald Gavron. His family, the Gavronskys, were of Lithuanian-Jewish origins, like my own. (A cousin of his, Helen Gavronsky, became famous and much honored as Mrs. Helen Suzman for her persistent stand against apartheid in the South African parliament.)

Nadine and Gerald divorced. While living in a small flat with her infant daughter, Nadine wrote her first novel, *The Lying Days*, which was published to great acclaim. Its epigraph is a quotation from W.B. Yeats:

> Though leaves are many, the root is one;
> Through all the lying days of my youth
> I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
> Now I may wither into the truth.

She was still in her twenties when she "withered into the truth." From then on, her rise was steady and steep.

She remarried in the early 1950's. Her second husband, Reinhold Cassirer, belonged to the well-known German-Jewish family which included the philosopher Ernst Cassirer. Reinhold's mother was known for her marvelous collection of Impressionist paintings. Reinhold himself was a businessman, divorced, the father of three children. He and Nadine had a son.

The Cassirers bought a house in Parktown, one of the older of the grand suburbs to the north of the city. They live in it still. Its walls are white, its roof, windows, and doors black: a somewhat austere house, outside and in, though the pictures are original Impressionists. It stands on a height and has a grand view northward over a wide valley. In the center of the lawn rises a small rocky *koppie*—a hillock—overgrown with stiff wild grasses: an intrusion of Africa in the European suburban garden.

Marriage, childbirth, travel, moving house—none of these interrupted Nadine's steady output. Book after book appeared, one every two years or so, in a regular pattern, novels alternating with collections of stories. In recent years there have also been some collections of speeches, lectures, articles. The leaves have been many indeed.

Nadine Gordimer has said that she writes about people, not ideas; but her work has a large political content, not simply because she has dealt with her own contemporary reality, which was the reality of apartheid, but because she has long been troubled about whether, and how, the races in South Africa can and should live together.

In 1959, when she thought of herself as one of the liberal minority threatened by two opposing nationalisms—white supremacism and Africanism—she wrote an essay entitled "Where Do Whites Fit

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In?" In it she asked, "What are we to do? Shall we go? Shall we leave Africa?" Some wanted to leave at that time, she noted, and some "have gone already." She herself, she said, fluctuated between a desire to be gone and a desire to stay.

She did stay, but many of us left.

Indeed, in 1960, whites began to depart in droves. It was a crucial year in South African politics. In March, 67 black demonstrators were shot dead by the police at a protest demonstration in the township of Sharpeville. Soon afterward I was visited by an acquaintance, a Jewish academic and Trotskyite revolutionary, who told me that an underground terrorist organization was being formed which he urged me to join. His reasoning, in brief, was this: it was obvious that peaceful means would not bring about the radical change that was required. If I wanted proof, I need look no further than the failure of my own father, Bernard Friedman.

As a member of parliament, my father had tried to persuade the opposition United party to adopt firmly anti-racist policies, but the party refused, so he resigned from it. He also then honorably resigned his seat in parliament and stood for reelection as an independent in his own constituency, the mainly Jewish district of Hillbrow, supposedly one of the most liberal in white South Africa. A number of young Left-radicals tried to help him win. They wanted his voice to be heard in parliament, and had he managed to be reelected, they might have waited to see if he could rally behind him a new and stronger opposition. But he lost the election by a few hundred votes.

Did that not show, my Tempter argued, that most whites were going over to the Nationalists, the party of oppression? Armed struggle was the only way. If I had ever been serious about wanting to change South Africa, I must act now with him and his group. It would be dangerous, but the cause was worth dedicating one's life to. It was, he reminded me, the cause of "justice and humanity."

I asked him whom they would attack. Anyone, he replied; that was the nature of this kind of warfare. Strikes had to be random, in order for it to become known that anyone at all could be the victim at any moment. "Children, too?" I asked. Both he and I had them. "Yes," he said, "children, too."

I took my children to England. We were settled in London when one morning I read in the newspapers that a time-bomb had been placed in the Johannesburg train station and had killed a woman and maimed a child for life. Later I heard that my would-be Tempter was among those arrested and charged with the crime. In due course he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, and his chief accomplice, an Englishman, was hanged.

Over the next two to three decades South Africa became the most reviled state in the world. Of all bad governments, South Africa's was deemed to be the worst. Anti-racism became a major political cause in the West, especially in the United States. At the same time, and partly as a result, the African National Congress—the ANC—gained popularity in Western Europe and America.

Formed in 1912 as a pacific movement to work toward black emancipation in South Africa, the ANC had been taken under the wing of the Communist party in the early 1930's; it was banned in 1960, as the Communist party itself had been ten years earlier. From then on the ANC became dedicated to violent means, the "armed struggle." In the 1970's and 1980's it was funded generously by the Soviet Union, Scandinavian governments, and the World Council of Churches. Its Communist ideology and Soviet connection did it little harm in the West. Nor did the fact that its adherents in South Africa were exploding bombs prevent governments from seeking to establish friendly relations with its exiled leaders.

The view from abroad was that as the white South African government was the bad guy, the ANC—the only widely-known black South African resistance movement—must be the good guy. Its imprisoned leader, Nelson Mandela, became the most famous and favored political martyr in the world. Popular opposition to apartheid rose everywhere, issuing in sports and cultural boycotts, sanctions, the withdrawal of air services, the picketing of South African embassies, a campaign of divestment. Has ever public disgust expressed itself so universally, so persistently, so passionately, so actively?*

As South Africa rose ever higher in the world's consciousness, so did Nadine Gordimer's reputation. I do not mean to imply that her reputation rose only because of the strong political stand she had herself taken against the South African regime; but politics hugely enhanced that reputation.

By the time I began to revisit my South African family regularly in the later 1970's, Nadine had lost sympathy with liberalism and had become a "radical." I myself found that some things in the country had changed for the better; most noticeably there was a rise in black prosperity. Nadine and Reinhold disagreed with me that this was a good thing. Reinhold said, "The blacks should not become prosperous. It would be better if they became poorer because then they would make revolution."

In December 1976, the Cassirers invited us to their farm, which lay some miles to the west of Johannesburg (it is the original of the farm in Nadine's novel *The Conservationist*). That evening Nadine took me for a walk through the fields and we talked about terrorism, a subject in which I had begun to specialize. She asked me about Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, the Italian aristocrat, publisher, and left-wing revolutionary, whom she had met. How had he come to blow himself up while trying to bomb a pylon in northern Italy—was it deliberate or accidental? Nobody knew for sure, I responded, but it was almost certainly accidental. Was it true that he had been a

* Or so selectively. In all those years there was no similar public expression of feeling in the West against the Communist countries, where torture, slave labor, arbitrary imprisonment, summary execution were being carried out on a scale that dwarfed, even though it could not diminish, the wickedness practiced in South Africa.

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patron of terrorist groups in Western Europe? Yes, it was true.

We then went on to speak of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who recently had been expelled from the Soviet Union and had spent the first few days of his freedom in West Germany with his fellow Nobel laureate, Heinrich Böll. Relations between them had quickly become strained and Solzhenitsyn had hurried away. (Perhaps, I thought but did not say, Böll had patiently tried to explain the glories of socialism to Solzhenitsyn and found him obstinately unreceptive.) Nadine and I both expressed surprise that anyone ever thought the two of them would get along. But whereas my sympathies were with the Russian for his stand against the Soviet regime and his years in the gulag, hers were with Böll.

DURING one of my visits, Nadine took me to a meeting of the Johannesburg branch of International PEN. At such meetings, she said, writers read passages of their own work, often works which were banned. The first reader that afternoon was a black poet. ("He belongs to what I call the motherfucker school of poetry," she had warned me.) Nadine herself read a piece from one of her novels that had been temporarily banned or embargoed. Then it was my turn. She introduced me and told the audience about the banning of one of my books. "So she has suffered too," she said.*

Nadine was an enthusiast for PEN. Not long after that meeting, however, when I was back in London, she cast her vote with a majority of members for the dissolution of the Johannesburg branch. The membership had been swollen by more black writers—some of whom had been enrolled without having published the number or type of works required by the rules of International PEN; and the black members, themselves under political pressure, insisted that PEN be dissolved on the grounds that it was a "white institution." A number of white members, including Nadine, bowed their heads and the branch was closed.

The action was argued against, courteously and cogently, by Lionel Abrahams, a poet, critic, editor, teacher of creative writing, and outspoken opponent of the regime. In a series of articles that appeared in a South African literary journal, Abrahams took one side while a supporter of closure took the other. I collected the articles and sent them to International PEN in London (to which I then belonged), asking that they be republished in PEN's own journal so that members in the wider world might discuss what had happened in Johannesburg. I expected the issue to arouse immediate interest and lively debate, since International PEN runs campaigns for freedom of speech. But my request was brushed aside.

IN THE mid-1980's, I spoke on television from time to time on questions concerning international terrorism. My view was—and is—that there is no cause, actual or conceivable, which justifies the use of terrorism; to condone it in any circumstances is to co-author it. Directly or by implication I condemned the violence of the ANC.

Once, after I had said something of the sort on a South African television program, Reinhold Cassirer met a cousin of mine in Johannesburg and asked her: "Aren't you appalled at what Jillian has been saying about the ANC?" "Not at all," my cousin replied, "I agree with her." "But doesn't she know," Reinhold demanded, "that Hitler was a terrorist?" "Of course she knows," my defender replied, "that's why she called her book on German terrorists *Hitler's Children*." But Reinhold was not mollified. To him "terrorism" was an unjustifiable activity which could only be committed by the Right; the Left, whatever means it used, was always justified by the ends it pursued and therefore by definition could not be guilty of terrorism.

The terrorism of the ANC had not crippled the regime, but bombs had killed a great many people, mostly black. Then, in the 1980's a new horror was practiced by the militants in the townships: "necklacing." A tire, filled with gasoline, was hung around the neck of the victim and set on fire. Men, women, and children as young as nine years old were burned to death by this method. Winnie Mandela, Nelson's wife, held up a box of matches at a rally of ANC supporters and said that with these they would liberate the country.

The victims of necklacing were described as "collaborators" or "informers." According to the burners, black policemen were the worst offenders. Other blacks were "collaborators" only in the sense that they had succeeded—against all odds—in business, or had become mayors of their townships; still others were wives, girlfriends, or children. On the principle of "no prosperity before revolution," all were to be made afraid of taking any route to change except the one laid down by the ANC.

As long as the ANC was banned and its leaders imprisoned or in exile, its sympathizers reacted to condemnation of barbarities like necklacing by saying that "black-on-black violence is not the issue." After the ban was lifted, the outbreak of murderous clashes in the townships between the ANC and the supporters of the Inkatha movement led by Chief Buthelezi resulted in a change of view. Black-on-black violence, ANC leaders now said, *was* a central issue. They demanded that the government do more to stop it, and accused the police (not without evidence) of inciting and assisting Inkatha. Still, to the Marxist ideologues in and close to the ANC, their own violence was good violence.

Among those Marxist ideologues, by this time, was Nadine Gordimer. In the course of her career she has written passionately against the burning of books; but she has not, as far as I can discover, written or spoken publicly against the burning of people.

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* That book of mine, first published in London, continued to be under ban in South Africa for years, until a Cape Town publisher applied for and won its release when the mildly reformist Botha government came to power. I had not much minded the banning because, as I said at the time, to have one's books banned in South Africa made one a self-respecting writer. In fact, all my books, fact and fiction, were banned or embargoed during a certain period. I did not see this as a cause of suffering—I suppose I had become too detached from South Africa by then—although I appreciated Nadine's sympathy.

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IT SEEMS Nadine is not entirely comfortable explaining her own ideas directly. In a lecture she gave at the New York Institute of the Humanities, Nadine remarked: "Nothing I say here will be as true as my fiction." The lecture was delivered in 1982, but it was republished in essay form as recently as 1989. In it she expounded her view—not contradicted in subsequent speeches and essays—that there is a need to have faith in socialism. Her argument, even if it is not "as true" as her fiction, deserves to be taken seriously, not least because there are still many intellectuals who find it difficult to accept that Marx has been proved wrong and the system bearing his name evil, and who continue to cling to some remnant of the old dream, for the same reasons that she does, out of the same desire.

In this lecture, Nadine conceded that she has been hesitant to criticize "the Communist system" because that can be understood, in South Africa, as a defense of the capitalist system "which has brought forth the pact of capitalism and racism that is apartheid." Besides, in South Africa there were detentions, banishments, uprootings "to match, if not surpass" the gulag.

The example of South Africa, in other words, showed that capitalism was as bad as, or worse than, Communism. Yet Nadine also pointed out that South Africa's capitalism "has been unlike anyone else's," because of the "many limitations" it placed on free enterprise by blacks.

The question she did not address was: could a system be called capitalist when the majority were hindered from participating in it? Implementation of the race laws required both the control of labor (job reservation, internal passports, work permits, etc.) and severe restrictions on the use of capital. Internal investment was limited by, for instance, the Group Areas act, which forbade members of any one racial group to own an equal or majority share in any enterprise or real estate situated in an area reserved for another racial group; and there was a general prohibition on investment outside of the rand currency area because the authorities feared an outflow of capital to the freer economies. In short, in its control of the lives of individuals, and particularly in its control of their economic life, apartheid bore a much closer resemblance to socialism than to capitalism. But this was not Nadine's understanding.

Nor, in her view, would an "alternative" or "reformed" capitalism be desirable in a future, nonracial South Africa—the reason being that capitalism's "avowed self-perpetuation of advancement for the many by creation of wealth for the few does not offer any hope to fulfill the ultimate promise of equality." And, for her, "equality" remained the ideal. The way to that ideal, she asserted, was the path historically associated with Communism or state socialism. To be sure, this would have to be a reformed or "alternative" branch of socialism, since the other kind "since 1917 has turned out not to be just or humane either, has failed this promise even more cruelly than capitalism." Still, only socialism upheld the ideal of equality, it alone could bring about "social justice."

Yet was not the very attempt to create economic and social equality the cause of disaster? She did not deny it, but suggested that the attempt must have been made in the wrong way. Nor did she say how else it might be tried, only that some way could and should be discovered. *An* attempt had failed, but there must be another: "we must pick up the blood-dirtied, shamed cause of the Left and attempt to recreate it in accordance with what it was meant to be, not what 65 years of human power perversion have made of it." Indeed, unless the West moved toward this unknown socialism, it would never be forgiven by the third world:

> This is where your responsibility to the third world meets mine. *Without the will to tramp toward* that possibility, no relations of whites, of the West, with the West's formerly subject peoples can ever be free of the past, because the past, for them, was the jungle of Western capitalism.

I DISAGREE with all this. I recognize, of course, that Nadine feels as she does because she has lived among racial inequalities cruelly maintained by centralized control, and I believe that her desire for equality springs from generosity of spirit. But my heart sinks at her asking that lives be experimented with—yet again!—in vain attempts to realize an intellectual dream; and I do not share her dream. I cannot see how any sort of socialism can be compatible with freedom, or how without freedom there can be prosperity.

There is a danger that Nadine's beliefs may influence the leaders of today's ANC—of which she is a member—and will not help them face the necessity of reformulating their ideology and their program. Instead of being urged to "tramp toward" some socialist "possibility," they need to abandon their schemes for nationalization, redistribution of wealth, and so on—the whole ragbag of ideological hand-me-downs they were loaded with under Communist tutelage—in readiness for participating in the government of a new South Africa. Nadine has called for whites to contribute their thoughts to the shaping of "a new kind of posited community, nonracial but conceived with and led by blacks." If all those thoughts should lead only to another doomed and quite possibly violent experiment in socialism, the majority of South Africans will have a long wait yet for the morning.

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Inhuman Comedy

MAUS II: A SURVIVOR'S TALE. AND HOW MY TROUBLES BEGAN. By ART SPIEGELMAN. *Pantheon. 136 pp. $18.00.*

Reviewed by HILLEL HALKIN

WHETHER or not Art Spiegelman was aware of it when he chose to portray Jews as mice in his much-lauded comic-strip series about the Holocaust, he was preceded by Franz Kafka, whose "Josephine the Singer, Or the Mouse Folk" tells of a rodent people that lead "a precarious existence amid the tumult of a hostile world" and are "inured . . . to suffering, not sparing of themselves, swift in decision, well acquainted with death, timorous only to the eye in the atmosphere of reckless daring which they constantly breathe." Whom Kafka had in mind when creating Josephine is a good question (most likely himself as a writer, although I once met an old woman in Jerusalem who had tutored him in Hebrew when she was young and claimed that Josephine was a portrait of her), but his "Mouse Folk" was clearly modeled on the Jews.

Nor, for that matter, was this an entirely original image of Kafka's. If by no one or nothing else, it was given him by the German language, in which the noun *Mauschel* means a "kike," and the verb *mauscheln*, to speak (and why not to sing?) with a Jewish accent. These two words, to be sure, derive from the Hebrew name Moshe, which in the German-Jewish pronunciation sounds like "Maushe," but German-speakers can hardly avoid associating them with *Maus* and its diminutive *Mäuschen*. Theodor Herzl actually wrote a short essay called *Mauschel* in which, far from denying that the anti-Semitic stereotype of the Jew had a basis in reality, he identified it with Jewish opponents of Zionism and railed against them: "Where the *Jew* feels pain or pride, *Mauschel*'s face shows only miserable fright or a mocking grin. In hard times, the Jew stands tall, but *Mauschel* cringes even more ignominiously," and so on. Kafka was fourteen at the time and may even have seen or heard of the piece.

It can be argued, no doubt, that in choosing to make his Jews mice (his Germans are cats, his Poles pigs, and his Americans dogs) Spiegelman, no less than Kafka, was seeking to invest certain qualities that have been blamed in part for the fate of European Jewry—passivity, timidity, a sense of resigned fatalism, etc.—with a quiet and life-accepting heroism. Perhaps. Bravely resourceful mice, after all, predate him even in the cartoon world, as in the old Tom-and-Jerry movie shorts. Certainly, one can share Herzl's feelings about *Mauschels*, who are by no means an extinct species, while taking in stride Spielgelman's choice of the mouse as a Jewish totem. I would be more offended by his imagery if I were a Pole.

But what is the point of such imagery? Is there really much to be gained in our understanding of how human beings behaved in the Holocaust by imagining them as various kinds of mammals? I rather think there is more to be lost. True, if I were a high-school teacher faced with the horrendous task of teaching the Holocaust to a class of indifferent American teenagers, I might at first glance consider *Maus* to be a godsend. It is easy to get through. It is intelligently written and drawn, and the dialogue between its two main characters, the cartoonist Art Spiegelman and his elderly father Vladek, who reminisces about his experiences in Poland and Auschwitz during World War II, is credibly done with a fine ear for Vladek's immigrant English. It is historically accurate in its facts while managing, through its focus on Vladek and his family, to tell the story of the Holocaust in a coherently compact manner. (*Maus I* takes the reader from the start of World War II to Vladek's and his wife's arrest by the Nazis; *Maus II* follows them through Auschwitz to their liberation by the American army at the end of the war.) It encourages, by shuttling back and forth between Vladek's memories and his troubled relationship with his American-born son, who loves, pities, and rages against him, an identification with the author that can involve teenagers with the subject and make them care about it. And finally, it makes sense. Why did the Germans murder the Jews, who did not fight back, while third parties like the Poles let it happen? For the same reason that cats kill mice, who do not attack cats, while pigs do not care about either: *because that's the way it is*, boys and girls, and next week we will be studying the Marshall Plan and the beginning of the cold war.

But that is not the way it is and not the way it was, and it is here that our history teacher, if at all conscientious, might have second thoughts. The Holocaust was a crime committed by humans against humans, not—as Nazi theory held—by one biological species against another. And while the German campaign of annihilation against the Jews and the reactions of the various peoples caught up in it had to do with many factors, historical, political, sociological, and ideological, instinctual behavior, except insofar as we all have instincts of aggression and survival, was not one of them. Because it implicitly invokes such behavior as *the* explanation for what happened to the exclusion of any other, *Maus* is a textbook that must be used with care and only in conjunction with supplementary material.

"BUT wait a minute! Who ever said that Art Spiegelman produced *Maus* as a juvenile textbook?" No one. But it will be used as one, particularly for children whose reading skills are undeveloped, and if it has any particular value, this is where it lies. As literature, even as Holocaust literature, it would simply be lost in the crowd: there are hundreds, probably thousands, of fictional works and autobio-

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graphical documents that deal with stories like Vladek's far more powerfully and profoundly, and one is doing *Maus* no favors by comparing it with them.

"But that's precisely the point! *Maus* is not a novel or a story, nor is it to be compared with one. It is a comic strip, possibly the first to have attained the level of a genuine art form!" Permit me my doubts. In fact, the curious thing about *Maus* is that, although its illustrations supposedly release it from the exclusive domination of language and fuse the verbal with the visual, the book's text is far more suggestive than its drawings, and does the yeoman's share of the work.

This is not because Art Spiegelman cannot draw well, but rather because, as seen through human eyes, animal faces are extremely hard to individuate, so that Spiegelman's mouse-Jews, pig-Poles, etc. all tend to look as alike as Donald Duck's nephews Huey, Dewey, and Louie, and have an extremely limited range of facial expression. Significantly, the most movingly illustrated pages in *Maus* occur in a scene in the first volume—a flashback in which the author recalls his psychiatric hospitalization and the suicide of his mother in New York—where the animal faces are dropped in favor of human ones. To draw people as animals, *Maus* makes one realize, is doubly dehumanizing, once by virtue of the symbolism and once by virtue of graphic limitations.

And yet even this flashback fails to convince me that comics, no matter how sophisticated, have the slightest potential to vie with either literature or art as a serious medium of expression. Language may indeed be tyrannically word-bound, but the visual arts are no less tyrannically space-bound, and yoking two tyrannies together in such a way that there is a minimum of room for maneuver within either is a poor strategy for overcoming them. All that happens in the comic strip is that one ends up more bound and chained than ever. The division into small boxes limits all utterances to the shortest and pithiest statements, ruling out nearly all verbal subtlety or complexity, while the need to fill each box with a drawing has a similar effect on the illustrations. Those who like to remind us that a picture is worth a thousand words tend to forget that a thousand words can be said in less time than it takes to draw most pictures, and that an artist who has to turn out a spatially cramped and crudely reproduced graphic accompaniment to every ten or twenty words of a story can hardly produce high-level work.

Lav achbara ganav ela chora ganav, "it is not the mouse who is the thief but the mousehole," says an old talmudic maxim, and it would be unfair to blame this particular mouse for the slumming pop-culture critics who have made more of it than it is or pretends to be. "A serious form of pictorial literature . . . an original and authentic form to draw us closer to [the Holocaust's] bleak heart," declares Lawrence L. Langer, for example, in a front-page review of *Maus* in the New York *Times Book Review*. Such talk should not be held against Spiegelman, though. He has not gotten to the heart of anything, nor can he with the tools of his trade, but it is his trade and he deserves respect for taking it as seriously as he does.

Man of the Century

BERNARD SHAW: THE LURE OF FANTASY, 1918-1950. By MICHAEL HOLROYD. RANDOM HOUSE. *544 pp. $30.00.*

Reviewed by TERRY TEACHOUT

FOR a very long time, George Bernard Shaw's status as an all-purpose sage appeared unassailable. His was the kind of personality around which cults form and flourish; when he died in 1950 at the age of ninety-four, President Truman issued a statement of condolence and the lights of Broadway were dimmed. Such was the charm of Shaw's impudent self-assurance that his legions of admirers seemed perfectly willing to ignore the fact that the West's greatest living playwright had, in Samuel Lipman's biting words, "used the freedoms of an Englishman to plump for the slavery of Russians." Only now that the Evil Empire has crumbled do the fulsome tributes paid to this committed Stalinist begin to look rather like exercises in black comedy.

Whatever posthumous decline Shaw has suffered as a political prophet, however, has had no obvious effect on his standing as a playwright; from that point of view, Michael Holroyd's decision to devote twenty years of his own life to writing a three-volume biography of Shaw seems quite unexceptionable. Shaw's eventful life had previously been very poorly written up. Shaw himself had a hand in all the full-length biographies published during his lifetime, and the results were invariably second-rate or worse. Holroyd, by contrast, is the first author of a major Shaw biography not to have known his subject personally, and the first to have sifted through the vast mound of biographical data that researchers have piled up in the four decades since Shaw's death.

The Lure of Fantasy, the final volume of the trilogy, is fully as impressive as its two predecessors, *The Search for Love* and *The Pursuit of Power*. The work as a whole is, of course, too long, and one hopes that Holroyd will eventually produce an abridged edition similar to his *Shorter Strachey*, but few multivolume literary biographies have proved so consistently rewarding. Holroyd has a strong sense of the relevant and a good, clean style that never irritates and never cloys. Like all first-rate biographers, he is sympathetic but unsparing, especially when dealing with Shaw's political philosophy, a subject that comes up frequently in *The Lure of Fantasy*. One assumes Holroyd's own politics to be at least mildly leftish, but there is nothing offensive or euphemistic about his treatment of Shaw's Stalinism.

IN RECOUNTING the life, Holroyd confirms in depressing detail what Shaw's kept biographers were only

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allowed to suggest: that Shaw's "devil of a childhood . . . rich only in dreams, frightful & loveless in realities" (as he described it in a letter to Ellen Terry) left him a lifelong emotional cripple. A godless puritan *par excellence*, the mature Shaw was so afraid of ordinary human feelings that he eventually entered into a *mariage blanc* with a frigid heiress, pouring his stunted passions into his work and his extravagant epistolary flirtations. A vegetarian teetotaler, he turned to music as his only sensual pursuit, yet in this area too he became uncomfortable whenever he strayed very far from the shallows: "He had an aversion," writes Holroyd, "to reflective, inward-looking music, and was sometimes a poor judge of chamber music because it tended to conflict with his commitment to optimism and the 24-hours-a-day cheerfulness which the public personality of G.B.S. piped forth."

If Shaw's background crippled him, it also left him determined to rise above the shabby gentility of his Dublin childhood. Looking back on his early years as a writer, he recalled a decade of "unbroken failure and rebuff, with crises of broken boots and desperate clothes . . . penniless, loveless, and hard as nails." But the poor boy who at the age of twenty came to London to make his way in the world had a strong mind and an even stronger will, and by the time he was forty he had turned himself into "G.B.S.," a public speaker of extraordinary force, a key figure in the Fabian movement, and the most successful English-language playwright of his time.

Having constructed himself, Shaw assumed that the rest of the human race could do the same thing. Like many self-made men, he had an expansive, even sentimental conception of the possible and a severely limited grasp of the impossible. "In his world," Holroyd writes, "there were no evil men except the insane; but there were evil circumstances which he could identify, attack, and eliminate." People who hold such views are doomed to disillusion, or worse. "The last stage of sentimentalism," as Irving Babbitt said, "is homicidal mania." Shaw lived long enough to reach that stage, though his mania, like everything else about him, was cheerfully impersonal.

Unmistakable signs of it had been visible throughout the first part of his career, even in the strangely violent metaphors of his music criticism, in which inept musicians are constantly being torn from limb to limb or tossed into lethal chambers. And when Shaw, appalled by the carnage of World War I and the short-sighted peace terms exacted by the Allies at Versailles, finally lost his faith in the power of democratic socialism to create a workers' paradise, he turned with apparent relish to the bloodiest brand of optimism known to man: totalitarianism.

"Beware of the pursuit of the Superhuman," the Devil says in Shaw's *Man and Superman*; "it leads to an indiscriminate contempt for the human." The first clear indication that Shaw had acquired such contempt was the utopian play cycle *Back to Methuselah*, completed in 1921; as Holroyd remarks, "Here was a 300-year-romance by an extremely fastidious man whose disgust with the physical condition of human beings compelled him to eliminate them from his philosophy." Characteristically, Shaw sent an inscribed copy of *Back to Methuselah* to Lenin, "the only European ruler who is displaying the ability, character, and knowledge proper to his responsible position."

THE climax of Shaw's indefatigable efforts to spruce up the image of Soviet Communism was his 1931 visit to the Soviet Union, during which he belched forth an endless stream of quotable remarks that, even in Holroyd's clipped summaries, have not yet lost their power to nauseate:

> He likened the penal colony at Bolshevo to Battersea Park, salivating over its menus, applauding its entertainments, and sympathizing with the criminals who "will not leave at the expiration of their sentences." . . . He looks forward to a good performance at "the torture chamber of the Cheka . . . [with] a victim or two ready, so that we may witness the process."

No less revolting was Shaw's own sprightly post-tour summary of life under Big Brother:

> Our question is not, to kill or not to kill, but how to select the right people to kill . . . the essential difference between the Russian liquidator with his pistol (or whatever his humane killer may be) and the British hangman is that they do not operate on the same sort of person.

To understand all, we are told, is to forgive all, and one feels from time to time that Michael Holroyd, who understands much about Shaw's twisted psyche, has tried too hard to forgive his itch for power. But Holroyd never seeks to justify the unjustifiable, and his only real mistake is in supposing that Shaw's "fantasies of longevity and dictatorship, which in the actual world did harm to no one, brought some relief to his despair." Shaw's Stalinism may have eased his growing sense of political impotence, but it was by no means harmless. By far the most celebrated fellow traveler of the 30's, Shaw did his best to confer moral legitimacy on Stalin's regime at precisely the time when the repudiation of Soviet Communism by a world-famous English writer could conceivably have made a difference. But the difference Shaw sought to make, and succeeded in making, was of the opposite kind. "The Webbs," Holroyd notes, "were Shaw's pre-eminent converts to Soviet Communism. But numerous fellow travelers in the 1930's heard his crusader's cry '*Vive* Stalin!' and took their inspiration from him." Among Western intellectuals, Stalin never had a better salesman than George Bernard Shaw.

ARCHIBALD HENDERSON, Shaw's first and most fawning biographer, called his book *Man of the Century*. Indeed, Shaw is one of the exemplary figures of the 20th century, the very model of the left-wing intellectual. One inevitably wonders how his reputation will hold up in the century to come. Certainly his sheer virtuosity is undeniable, and it is sometimes possible to ignore the political agendas of his plays and revel in the glitter of their electric prose rhythms, as anyone

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who has ever become caught up in a good performance of *Pygmalion* or the "Don Juan in Hell" interlude from *Man and Superman* can testify. But Shaw saw himself primarily as a propagandist, and he would surely have expected his propaganda to be judged by its effectiveness rather than by its artistry. In the wake of the worldwide collapse of Communism, it is hard to see how Shaw can continue to be taken seriously as a playwright of ideas (except, perhaps, at certain American universities). Anyone who reads Holroyd's Shaw from beginning to end is likely to come away echoing Max Beerbohm, who, asked to contribute to a ninetieth-birthday *Festschrift*, responded with this trenchant epitaph for his old colleague:

> I think that no great man at the moment of his reaching the age of ninety should be offered anything but praise. And very fond though I am of G.B.S. and immensely kind though he has always been to me, my admiration for his genius has during 50 years and more been marred for me by dissent from almost any view that he holds about anything.

Outsider With a Camera

HARLEM PHOTOGRAPHS: 1932-1940. By AARON SISKIND. With a new introduction by Maricia Battle. Foreword by GORDON PARKS. *Smithsonian Institution Press. 80 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by
IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ

THE republication of Aaron Siskind's *Harlem Photographs*, in a new edition prepared to complement an exhibition mounted by the National Museum of American Art, is a welcome event. For in Siskind's images one recaptures something of that amazingly rich decade of the 1930's when Harlem

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What are the facts?

■ Despite decisive military defeats in the wars that they have launched against the Jewish state since the very day of its birth, the Arabs, in an almost unbelievable act of mental acrobatics, deny the existence of the country that has inflicted such severe and repeated punishment on them. When it becomes inevitable to mention the Jewish state it is referred to only as "the Zionist entity".

■ This non-acknowledgement of Israel's existence is not simply a matter of semantics. Arab maps do not show Israel, but a vast area, including Jordan, labeled as "Palestine". Cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa simply don't exist. Arab school children, though imbued from earliest age with hatred of the Jews, have no "official" knowledge of the existence of Israel. They learn about it, one supposes, just as they learn about sex, by whispered comments in the schoolyard. Schedules of foreign airlines that show Israel on their route maps or that list Israeli destinations are not allowed in the countries. Foreign publications (among them, one regrets to report, such U.S. magazines as *Time* and *Newsweek*) print special editions for the Arab countries, since no publication carrying advertising of Israeli firms may appear in those countries. And, of course, tourists of any nationality may not enter most Arab countries if their passports shows evidence that the holder has ever visited Israel, the "non-existent country". Not too many months ago, a U.S. Senator was barred from entering Saudi Arabia, our "faithful ally", because of an Israeli visa stamp that had been placed in his diplomatic passport.

■ As an inducement to Israel for yielding land that is absolutely indispensable for the country's defense, the Arabs now and then offer the possibility of the "recognition" of Israel's existence. The sad and almost incomprehensible aspect of that is that many well-meaning people in the U.S., in other countries, and, yes, even in Israel believe that this might be an acceptable bargain for Israel. But Israel's existence is in no way dependent on the recognition of any Arab state. It's simple: Israel exists because it exists. Therefore, supposing that any meaningful face-to-face meetings came about and if, say, a Syrian diplomat should ask Israel what it would be prepared to "give" if Syria would consider acknowledging Israel's existence, Israel should reply that Israel might in turn consider acknowledging *Syria's* existence. Or, Israel could declare a boycott of the Arab world and could offer to relax or to rescind such boycott in consideration of parallel gestures by the Arabs.

The bizarre concept of Israel's "non-existence" has been around for over forty years. Many good people, including quite a few in Israel itself, have been led to believe that Israel should bring substantial sacrifices, even to the point of imperiling its own security and survival, in order to get the Arabs to acknowledge Israel's existence. It is often said that Israel needs to be "recognized" by the Arabs in order to "normalize her condition". But need not the Arabs, too, live in "normalized conditions"? And Israel is often promised that, in return for yielding vital strategic territory to the Arabs, she would be assured of "safe and secure borders". But don't the Arabs also need borders that are safe and secure? The Arab countries and much of the world have come to believe that peace is only good and desirable for Israel. But it is surely at least as important for the Arabs, who have lived through and have been bloodily defeated in five wars with Israel – the "non-existent country". Peace and prosperity can and will come to this troubled region only when the Arabs accept the reality of Israel's existence and negotiate with her openly and in good faith.

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became the capital of the black American world.

The virtues of Siskind's vision of Harlem are readily perceived: a brilliant documentary sensibility coupled with a formal grace which in nearly every photo manages to convey hardship without ignoring the strength and dignity of the men, women, and children who inhabit the streets. The sources of his photography, too, are clear enough: Siskind had an interest in writing and music (he was an English teacher in the New York City public-school system), and was involved in politics and oratory (he had been a member of the Young People's Socialist League).

In her introduction to this volume, Maricia Battle follows Siskind's evolution as a documentary photographer. In her judgment, the images produced by him serve to "proclaim the aesthetic priorities" of one who "with only the best of intentions made a nation aware of its economic injustice and to hope for social reform." Gordon Parks, in his foreword, similarly points to the way in which, 50 years later, "joy, sorrow, happiness, and despair still hang out together" in these images. Yet there are curious errors both of omission and commission in this view of the Siskind photographs.

With several noteworthy exceptions, all of Siskind's work is street work. That is to say, these are images of public places and public action. Here we have the mandatory marchers, strikers, dancers, musicians, actors, streetwalkers. But private life, what went on behind the walls of the tenements of Lenox Avenue and the mansions of Sugar Hill, is simply absent. We see a janitor in front of his building with a sign, "Furnished Room To Let," but we get no taste of that room or the life within it.

In part, this is the perennial problem of the outsider with a camera. In part, it is a limitation of the photographic medium as such—the difficulty which it has in touching matters of the soul. But in large part it was also a problem in the socialist vision of that decade, which took for granted that everything important was happening in the streets.

That is why the written text in this volume, derived from materials developed by the Federal Writers' Project of the 1930's, is so important. Through the narratives and poems that surround the photos we approach the reality of black life in Harlem with an intensity and meaning absent from Siskind's documentary pictures. It is the word rather than the image that gives us a strong sense of Harlem life.

To begin with, there are the wonderful peddler poems of Clyde "Kingfish" Smith. One example will have to suffice: "Say, ice man, I want some today.// So hurry up and bring it,/ Before I go away.// Bring fifty pound,/ And hurry right down,/ Cause you got/ The best ice in this town.// You can chop it up/ And make it small,/ Better bring it quick/ Or not at all.// I want to put it on my fish/ Because it's nice and hot,/ And I better do something/ Before they rot."

The children's street rhymes are equally fine, and deserve a place in that tiny pantheon of memorable verse for and by the very young. Here is one that I can remember singing myself as a Jewish child in Harlem: "Joe Louis/ Don't catch me/ Catch that man behind the tree/ He stole apples/ I stole none/ Put him in jail just for fun."

At the other end of the spectrum is a 1939 interview (conducted by the novelist Ralph Ellison) of one Jim Barber, a sometime musician-singer. Jim Barber sees everything through the prism (or is it the prison?) of black-white relations. Even when he goes home to eat he cannot get beyond his daily hatreds: "When I get home, gonna cook the cabbage and bacon, gonna make me some corn fritters and set back in my twenty-five-dollars-a-month room and eat my fritters and cabbage and tell the Jews to forgit it!" He dreams of the pending Hitlerite invasion of Europe, when "All the white folks'll be killing off one another." But beyond that dream is only despair. For "when Negroes start running things I'll have to get off the earth before it's too late!"

The photos of Aaron Siskind never quite make contact with the Jim Barbers of Harlem. To Jewish socialists like Siskind, black people were to be seen only as potential allies in the coming class struggle. Today, of course, there is no mistaking the fact that nationalism and not old-fashioned socialism is the credo of the dispossessed, just as the symbolism of Islam has displaced that of Christianity and drugs have replaced gambling as the common language of the body. The destructive energy of the 1990's has triumphed over the creative energy of the 1930's. One wonders, indeed, whether an artistic descendant could or would be moved to photograph the externals of Harlem today as Aaron Siskind did 50 years ago. If the purpose of books like this one is to stimulate such thoughts about how far we have failed to come in the cause of human understanding, then *Harlem Photographs: 1932-1940* succeeds admirably.

Cold-War Liberal

ENTERING NEW WORLDS. By MAX M. KAMPELMAN. *HarperCollins. 402 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by DAVID BROCK

MAX KAMPELMAN had a front-row seat at many of the central political dramas of the post-World War II era: the rise of McCarthyism, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the McGovernization of the Democratic party, the defeat of world Communism by the resurgent democracies of the West. It is thus hardly to be wondered at that this veteran Democratic-party insider, who concluded his remarkable career as Ronald Reagan's chief arms negotiator, should have written so engrossing a personal and political memoir.

For one who came to be regarded as a prototypical cold-war liberal (a term of derision in fashionable circles), Kampelman arrived at his views on the need for military pre-

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paredness by a rather unconventional route. Born to Jewish immigrants from Romania in 1920, Kampelman attended yeshiva schools in his Bronx neighborhood and then the uptown campus of New York University as an undergraduate and a law student. Under the tutelage both of a Reform rabbi at NYU and of Quakers at a college summer camp, he came to believe that democracy was the political expression of the Jewish religious ethic—*and* that the democratic cause was best served through pacifist commitment. He would go on to make a career based on the former proposition, which necessarily entailed abandoning the latter.

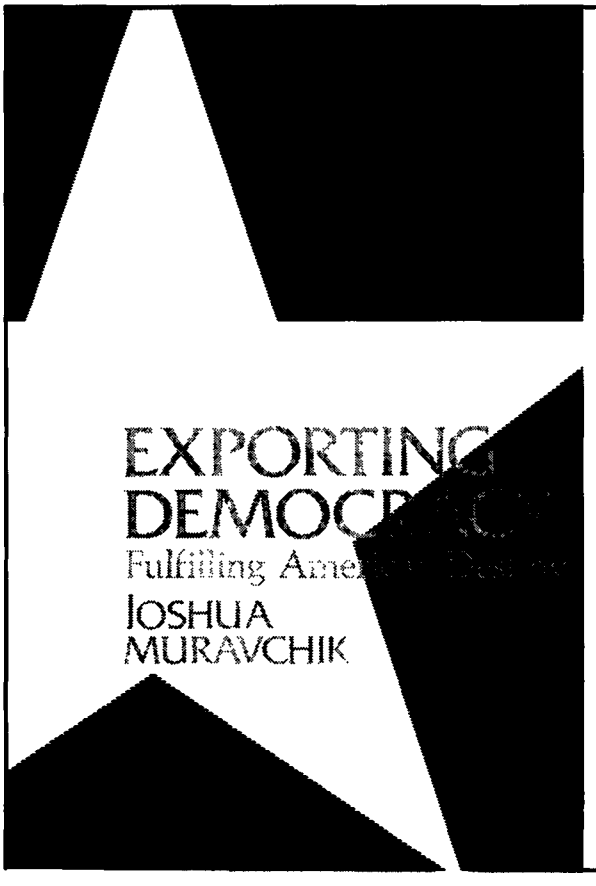
During World War II, and despite an awareness, however incomplete, of the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust, Kampelman served as a conscientious objector in Minnesota, volunteering to be a subject in U.S. government experiments on the effects of starvation in humans. But by the time the war ended, the atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki had convinced him that pacifism's power to persuade counted as nothing against a nuclear-armed enemy.

Kampelman stayed on in Minnesota, joining a group of feisty liberal, pro-labor anti-Communists, including a young Hubert Humphrey, to found the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party and Americans for Democratic Action. His relationship with Humphrey would remain close until the latter's death in 1978, and in many ways this book is as interesting for what it tells us about Hubert Humphrey as for what it tells us about Max Kampelman.

Thus, Kampelman evokes convincingly the appeal in the mid-1940's of Humphrey's reformist political program—he was then mayor of Minneapolis—with its emphasis on tough criminal sentences, equal opportunity, local government initiative, and small-business enterprise. Kampelman also reveals some tidbits for political historians, such as the confidential message Humphrey received from Lyndon Johnson the day after the 1964 election, in which Johnson told his Vice President that he would not run for reelection in 1968. He also describes how Humphrey used his influence behind the scenes with both Johnson and Richard Nixon to secure military aid for Israel in the 1967 and 1973 wars. Finally, the book is full of personal reminiscences: for example, of then-Senator Humphrey doing the dishes and vacuuming the rugs after hosting a dinner party.

AFTER working as a top aide in Humphrey's Senate office for six years, Kampelman struck out on his own, combining law, business entrepreneurship, and public affairs. He founded a major Washington bank and—in a move of perhaps more questionable value—the first of the Washington talk shows, *Washington Week in Review*. At a time when other Democratic-party "wise men" were establishing themselves as back-room fixers and influence-peddlers, Kampelman rejected several lucrative lobbying assignments to avoid the appearance that he was trading on his political connections. He also turned down an offer to be Johnson's White House counsel in 1963 because he believed his closeness to Humphrey, then angling for a spot on the 1964 ticket, could have presented a conflict. This scrupulousness, one suspects, had something to do with the fact that Kampelman, as distinct from so many of the confidantes and counselors who clog the corridors of official Washington, seems always to have been motivated more by ideas than by power.

One of those ideas was staunch anti-Communism. In fact, Kampelman's association with Humphrey stemmed from a campaign to root out Communist influence in Minnesota's liberal political movement and labor unions. In Washington in the early 1950's, the two began a battle to recapture for the Democrats a cause that had been claimed and then disfigured by the McCarthyite Right. The Democratic party, however, continued its dismaying drift in the direction of *anti*-anti-Communism and neo-isolationism. By the time of the 1968 national convention, Kampelman writes, the party had fallen



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under the influence of far-Left protesters who appeared to him "more fascist than liberal in their style and behavior." The last straw was 1972, when the Democratic convention chairman tilted the nomination to the candidate of the counterculture, George McGovern. At this juncture Kampelman began to withdraw from the inner circle of the party and joined other dissident Democrats in forming the Coalition for a Democratic Majority.

THAT Kampelman and his fellow pro-defense, anti-Communist Democrats lost the battle for the soul of the Democratic party is by now a familiar story, though how they went on to play a crucial role in winning the cold war has not yet been fully appreciated. Kampelman writes that he was surprised when, in 1981, President Reagan renewed his appointment as chairman of the U.S. delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at Madrid, which was charged with reviewing the implementation of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Yet on the evidence of this memoir, the appointment of Kampelman and other leading neoconservative Democrats to foreign-policy positions in the new administration seems to have been perfectly natural. For like Reagan, and unlike most traditional Republicans, these people had an instinctive feel for the ideological dimension of the U.S.-Soviet contest. By and large, it was Democrats like Kampelman who raised their voices for more than two decades in behalf of Eastern Europe, the Baltic states, and the refusenik community in the Soviet Union.

At Madrid, Kampelman spoke plain truths, unvarnished by diplomatic niceties. His activities there—which included the cataloguing and publicizing of specific abuses by the Soviet state, as well as efforts to get individual victims, particularly Jewish dissidents, released from Soviet jails—had the effect of convincing many in Western Europe that such Soviet abuses constituted a threat to their own peace and stability. In so doing, he helped lay the political groundwork for NATO's deployment of intermediate-range Pershing and Cruise nuclear weapons. From Kampelman's description of the elaborate Soviet efforts in Madrid to shift the focus of the meetings to disarmament, it seems fair to conclude that achieving this deployment was one of the most important foreign-policy undertakings of the first Reagan term, second only, perhaps, to the announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), in which, as it happened, Kampelman was also to play a pivotal role.

BY 1985, Reagan's hardline policies had succeeded in bringing the Soviets back to the arms-control bargaining table, and Reagan turned to Kampelman to head the negotiating team in Geneva. Kampelman was assigned overall responsibility for three sets of talks: on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF); on strategic arms; and on arms in space, which he personally conducted. In the 1987 INF treaty, requirements for verification—an issue dismissed for years by the foreign-policy establishment as a right-wing fixation—marked a milestone, a high standard that was probably not met in the fine print of the Bush administration's subsequent START agreement.

As for SDI, Kampelman's penchant for defying conventional wisdom once again served him well. In the chapters recounting his experiences in Geneva, Kampelman hones in on the central inconsistency of the anti-SDI argument—according to its opponents, SDI was scientifically impossible, *and* it threatened the nuclear balance—and politely suggests that Democratic opponents of SDI in Congress were doing the Soviets' negotiating for them by legislating constraints on the program that the Soviets were not able to achieve in the Geneva talks.

Within the Reagan administration, which was divided as to a timetable for deploying missile defenses, Kampelman, who by this time also held the rank of counselor to Secretary of State George P. Shultz, seems to have sided with the go-slow school. From the point of view of producing useful defenses, this was probably a mistake; most of the foreign-policy establishment never understood (or perhaps it understood too well) that with SDI, the better was always the enemy of the good. On a grander scale, however, the debate turned out not to matter much, for the mere prospect of SDI was enough to unnerve the Soviets and cause them to surrender in the arms race.

IT IS somewhat disappointing that Kampelman's thorough discussion of foreign and defense policy is not matched by a similarly full treatment of domestic policy. One wonders, for example, what he thinks about the corruption of the once-admirable Americans for Democratic Action to the point where it is now a leading agent in the campaign to defame judicial nominees who do not toe a left-wing line. Kampelman offers passing references to domestic-policy differences he has with both Democrats and Reaganites, but these raise more questions than answers. Still, the omission is understandable, given Kampelman's almost exclusive preoccupation with foreign and defense policy in the last decade. For that preoccupation we have reason enough to be thankful.

New Wave Feminism

BACKLASH: THE UNDECLARED WAR AGAINST AMERICAN WOMEN. By SUSAN FALUDI. *Crown. 552 pp. $24.00.*

Reviewed by CHARLOTTE ALLEN

ONLY a few years ago feminism was reported to be dead, done in at least in part by the backsliding of some of its own pioneers. By the mid-80's, Betty Friedan was criticizing her more militant sisters for their masculine hairstyles, and Germaine Greer was championing the traditional, family-centered cultures of rural Italy and India. Even Gloria Steinem tried to catch a man. In the middle class, the young career women who were supposed to be feminism's chief beneficiaries were buying silk dresses, voting Republican, looking for husbands, talking about children.

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Reports of the movement's demise turned out to be premature. Comes now Susan Faludi, who, along with Naomi Wolfe, deconstructionist of the "beauty myth," is at the forefront of a young and energetic second wave of feminism that makes the first wave seem as insipid and dated as the old "feminine mystique" of frilly aprons and Tupperware parties Friedan used to mock.

Backlash, an exceedingly long book, is also representative of the prolix new genre of 80's-bashing, already a little tired though we are only two years into the 90's. Most 80's-bashing books fixate on junk bonds and undertenanted office towers, twin symbols of the debt-loaded culture of the Reagan era. To Faludi, the same decade also witnessed a "backlash" against feminism that "moved through the culture's secret chambers, traveling through passageways of flattery and fear." *That*, she says, is what accounts for the silk dresses and the husband-hunting.

The 80's for Faludi would seem to have been not the Greed Decade but the Kneed Decade, a period when women who dared to be liberated really took it in the groin, not just from religious fundamentalists and conservative politicians but from those putative allies of feminism, the popular media, and, of course, the old-line feminists themselves. In Faludi's book, Friedan and Greer lie down (figuratively) with such bogeypersons as George Gilder, Robert Bork, Allan Bloom, Gary Bauer (Reagan's straight-arrow family-policy czar), and Randall Terry, leader of the anti-abortion group Operation Rescue. This is a book in which not to be part of the solution is emphatically to be part of the problem.

Faludi, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, writes with a journalist's easy flair and an occasional striking turn of phrase reminiscent of Barbara Ehrenreich, who works the same ideological turf in a much more original fashion. (Ehrenreich has her own 80's-basher out, tellingly titled *The Worst Years of Our Lives*.) And *Backlash* is nothing if not thoroughly researched: Faludi devotes a full 89 pages to agate-size footnotes documenting the scholarly and media sources of every factual assertion she has stuffed into her dense, wordy chapters.

For all that, *Backlash* is a thin book, its workaholic scholarship and competent writing masking stick-figure stereotypes of relations between men and women, and between cultures and their artifacts. It is a pamphlet with but one point to make, repeated again and again like the drumbeat that calls to order those trendy men's-movement hugathons (another symptom of the "backlash"). In fact, when one has finished this book, practically the only thing one sees are the file folders of newspaper clippings and stacks of index cards that were its raw materials, with, protruding awkwardly here and there like skin grafts that failed to take, a few profiles of leading backlash instigators, typically a little off-point. There is little real reporting in the book, and none of the sustained theorizing or distanced observation that we might expect from a work of cultural criticism.

HERE is Faludi's entire thesis:

> The backlash is not a conspiracy, with a council dispatching agents from some central control room, nor are the people who serve its ends often aware of their role; some even consider themselves feminists. For the most part, its workings are encoded and internalized, diffuse and chameleonic. Not all of the manifestations of the backlash are of equal weight or significance, either; some are mere ephemera, generated by a culture machine that is always scrounging for a "fresh" angle. Taken as a whole, however, these codes and cajolings, these whispers and threats and myths, move overwhelmingly in one direction: they try to push women back into their "acceptable" roles—whether as Daddy's girl or fluttery romantic, active nester or passive love object.
>
> Although the backlash is not a movement, that doesn't make it any less destructive. In fact, the lack of orchestration, the absence of a single string-puller, only makes it harder to see—and perhaps more effective. A backlash against women's rights succeeds to the degree that it appears not to be political, that it appears not to be a struggle at all. It is most powerful when it goes private, when it lodges in a woman's mind and turns her vision inward, until she imagines the pressure is all in her head, until she begins to enforce the backlash, too—on herself.

This is an argument impossible to gainsay. It requires no proof; indeed, the very lack of proof demonstrates the insidiousness of the phenomenon, a seamless and invisible spider web stretching into every corner of contemporary culture. By maintaining that the backlash is a "movement" yet not an "organized" movement, a "struggle" that appears "not to be a struggle at all," a chimera-like phenomenon that exists now as concrete "threats" from the militant Right, now as mere media-generated "ephemera," now as disembodied feelings "in a woman's mind" with no objective correlatives whatsoever, Faludi can have it all ways, can seize all sticks with which to beat her opponents.

Seize them she does. One stick is the brouhaha that ensued when several researchers at Harvard and Yale issued a report in 1986 demonstrating that the chances of a college-educated, never-married woman at finding a husband start falling rapidly at age thirty and plunge to almost zero after age forty. The Harvard-Yale findings turned into a *Newsweek* cover story and generated quite a bit of panic among successful single women who would never see thirty again.

According to Faludi, this was a typical manifestation of the backlash at its most duplicitous and demoralizing. Her own first move is to attack the researchers' methodology, implying that they made up the statistics for ideological reasons. She cites a rival study by a female Census Bureau demographer—the Harvard-Yale team was headed by a man—which concluded that a never-married woman with a college degree actually has about a one-in-five chance of finding a husband after age forty. What a relief.

Faludi then proceeds to tactic No. 2: who cares, anyway? She cites polls showing that the happiness of single women *rose* during the

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1980's, while that of their married sisters declined. Finally, she devotes five pages to the travails of a still-single thirty-six-year-old woman (not one of the happy ones, evidently) who signed up for $20,000 worth of plastic surgery in the hopes of winning a bet that she could beat the odds and find a spouse before reaching her fifth decade.

This is the kind of reasoning that used to make men say, "She's so cute when she gets mad." Faludi faults Gary Bauer because his wife is a full-time homemaker. Then she turns around and faults Michael Levin, an anti-feminist professor of philosophy at the City University of New York, because his wife has a career as a mathematician. Heads, I win; tails, you lose. As might be expected, she puts great stock in the "gender gap," the belief that all women are closet ultra-liberals. Did George Bush happen to get 49 to 50 percent of the female vote in the 1988 election? That was "not a real majority," sniffs Faludi.

Her most scathing denunciations, though, are reserved not for the right-wingers but for the hapless female scholars who have entertained revisionist thoughts about the fruits of the past two decades' liberation: such figures as the sociologist Lenore Weitzman, who reported a drastic decline in an ex-wife's living standards after a typical no-fault divorce (bad numbers, Lenore!), and Rosalind Rosenberg, a historian at Barnard who testified at a Sears, Roebuck sex-discrimination trial that female sales employees gravitated toward lower-paying no-commission jobs out of a preference for less competitive work (how could you, Rosalind?). Faludi likes to slip personal barbs into her critiques, pointing out Rosenberg's close friendship with one of the Sears lawyers, or the *haut-bourgeois* existence enjoyed by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, whose book, *A Lesser Life*, claims solidarity with working-class women against hardline feminists.

FOR all that, *Backlash* might actually have been an interesting book had Susan Faludi explored some of the phenomena she writes about rather than simply listing them in her catalogue of outrages. For example, she cites *Good Housekeeping*'s "New Traditionalist" advertising campaign, which shows contented mothers and children in cozy domestic settings. Neotraditionalism is, in fact, exactly what Faludi implies that it is: a veneer of comforting make-believe covering the severe social and familial dislocation of the late 20th century. It is an image of traditionalism, not its reality, serving to satisfy intense longings for the structure and order supplied by traditional institutions, chiefly religion and the authoritarian family, without forcing people to give up the things that they would have to give up if they adopted those institutions in their substance. Women can tie hair-ribbons around their little girls' pigtails, put a handmade quilt on the bed, bake a pie (or at least read about baking one), and still get to do pretty much whatever they want. Weddings become more elaborate and expensive as marriages become shorter and more contingent.

In truth, feminism is merely a part of a larger and longer-range trend of universal liberation, not just from oppressive husbands and fathers but from all demands, erotic and otherwise, that have seemed burdensome, annoying, or irrational. People in general have become free to pursue their self-interest—careers, wealth accumulation, romantic passions, sexual desires—unhindered. One might find the source of this trend, as Tom Wolfe does, in the four-decade surge of post-World War II prosperity that gradually melted down the chains of necessity binding people together in inconvenient relationships, combined with what Wolfe calls "the fifth freedom—freedom *from* religion." Or, looking back further in time, one might see feminism's roots in the Enlightenment idea of the social contract: people would be better off if their ties to others and to institutions were strictly voluntary, a matter of rational choice directed by mutual self-interest. This has naturally wreaked havoc upon the family, for hardly anyone would freely choose the grab-bag of embarrassing and uncongenial characters who happen to be his relatives. Having first stripped the family of its tribal, multigenerational character, social-contract theory then went to work on marriage itself—hence, easy divorce, the sexual revolution, the women's movement. It is currently playing itself out in the desire of middle-class parents to have "autonomous" children. Young people have their own cars, cash, designer clothes, telephones, and television sets, while doing fewer household chores than ever before in history.

MANY women have found universal liberation to be as disturbing as it is supposed to be exhilarating. The disruption of traditional courtship and marriage patterns that has accompanied liberation means that young middle-class women spend years wondering when and where they will ever find a husband, all the while feeling varying degrees of dissatisfaction, contempt, and rage at the men they do meet and sleep with, or fight off sleeping with. Women who marry discover that it is more exhausting than glamorous to pursue a career outside the home while being a wife, let alone a mother of small children, at the same time.

Perhaps, as Susan Faludi suggests, it is wrong and reactionary for women to want to be wives and mothers—status roles left over from the days before all human relationships became matters of the marketplace. Yet most women do so want, and if Susan Faludi means to "liberate" them from those desires, she is talking about liberating them from womanhood itself. No wonder American women feel so ambivalent about feminism. Today, they will read *Backlash*; tomorrow, it will be *Smart Women, Foolish Choices*. Today, they will fret about the "glass ceiling"; tomorrow, they will have their chins resculpted. They will feel faintly discontented or wildly desperate. They will blame it on feminism, or on men, or on the media, or on themselves. But it is not a backlash. It is more a case of wanting and not really wanting to go back.

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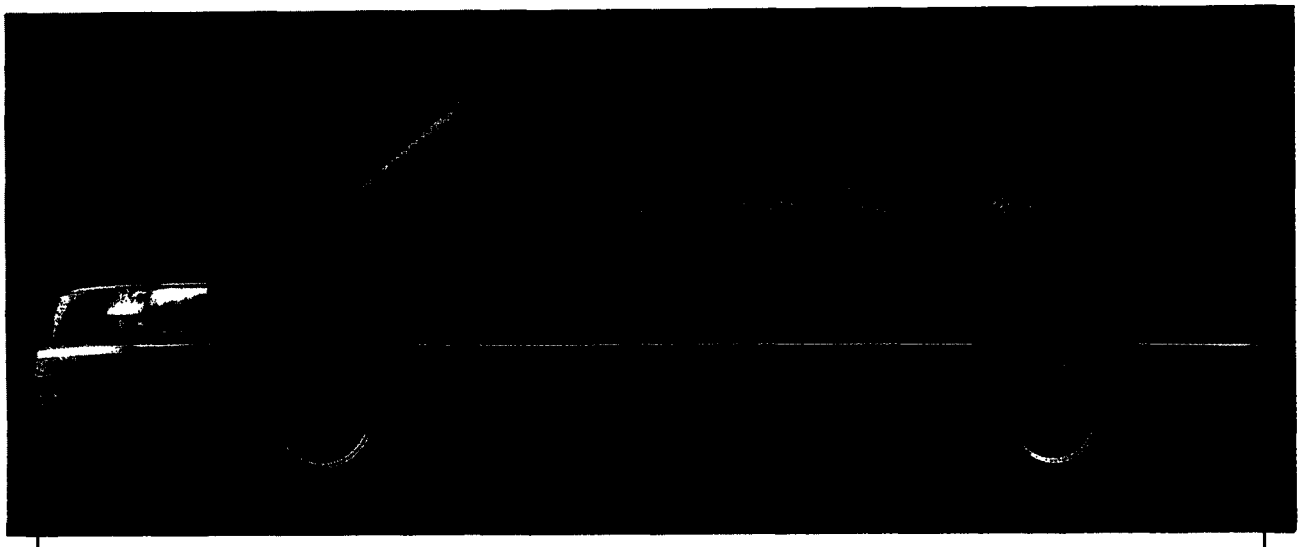

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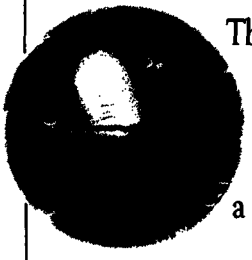

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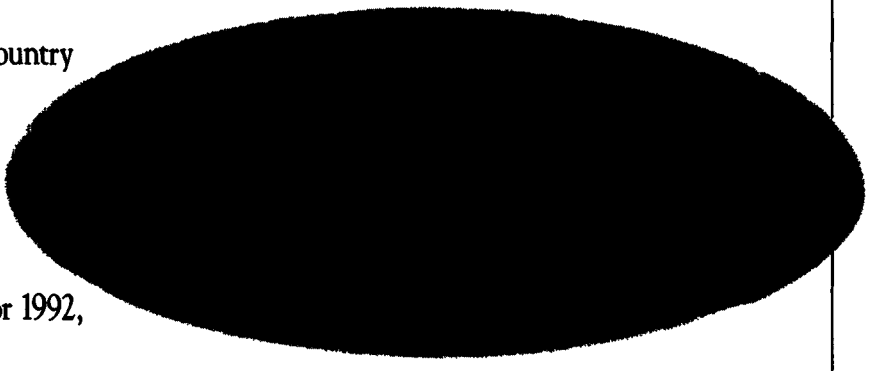

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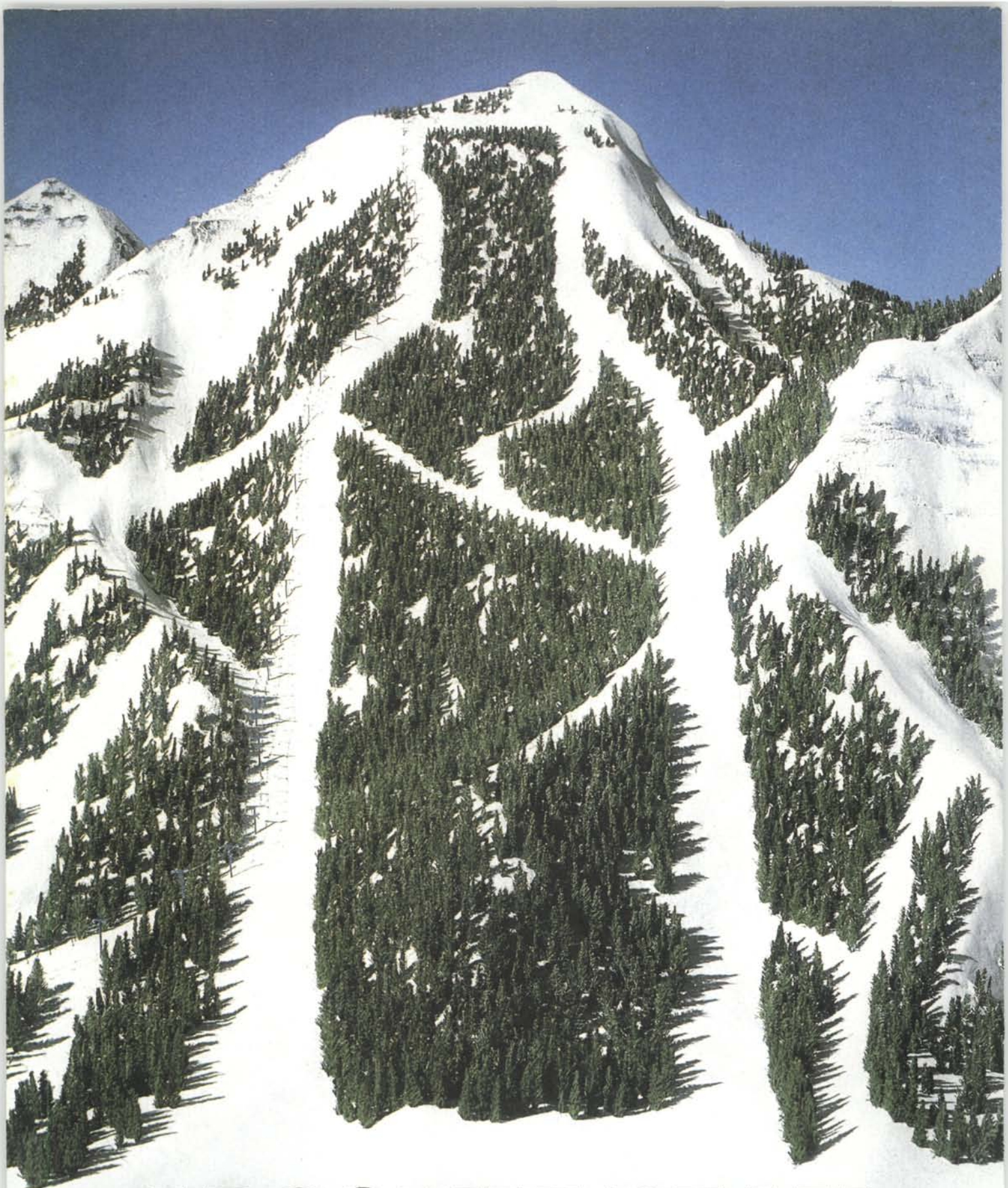

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